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The Double Squeeze



Henry Beach Needham





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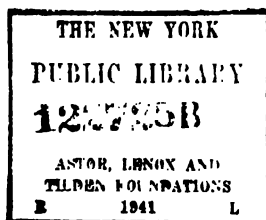
BY
HENRY BEACH NEEDHAM



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CONNIE MACK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN
AND
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GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
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ILLUSTRATIONS

On the dot a triumphant procession moved
ceremoniously into the presence of the chief
of the Giant-killers. Tris Ford laughed.
He couldn't help it *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"I do believe that's true." For emphasis she
rested her hand for a moment on his sleeve.
Her touch gave him an odd thrill . . . 64

The next morning the *North Star* had a beat
on every paper in the city 140

"I've got one great idea. S'pose we send
Arrowsmith to college—to the old coll, just
to show that we haven't forgotten 'em" . 184

INTRODUCTION

Way back in the schedule before the Athletics had won a World's Championship, when our club as it now appears in the box-score was playing on college diamond or sand lot or in the bushes, a letter was brought to my office, written by an old player, introducing Henry Beach Needham. In it I was asked to permit Mr. Needham to accompany our club on the last Western trip of the season, in order to give him a chance to write some magazine articles on baseball. I was in something of a pinch on account of the request, mainly because I wasn't caring much about having the team written up at this time. To be exact, it was the season after the Giants defeated us in the World's Series, when the fine old Athletic machine was beginning to go to pieces. In fact, on this trip I am talking of I left most of my regulars at home. Eddie Collins was taken along for a try-out, and played shortstop in some of the games, which will tell, better than I can do, what our batting order was like. As Bender and Plank were not in the party, there wasn't a man

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now playing regularly with the Athletics, with the exception of Collins. The "hundred-thousand-dollar infield" was not even a dream, much less a combination waiting on the bench to be formed.

So it was a team of green youngsters—material the rawest—that I had in charge, and which Mr. Needham was to see perform. I invited him to make the trip. Why? Because he has a way, in talking to a person, of getting you to do what he wants. It's hard to refuse him anything.

He proved to be the sort you like to travel with. At the hotels he and I had adjoining, usually connecting, rooms. We ate together, we spent our evenings together; more than that, he sat on the bench with me. In this way he began to learn baseball.

Of course by that I mean what is sometimes called, for want of a better name, "inside baseball." Like all American boys, he had played the game as a kid, and he was—I ought to say is—an ardent fan—the kind that pulls for you winning or losing. But this didn't keep him from learning. The quickness with which he picked up the fine points of play surprised me. He soon had what we hear so much about—baseball brains.

His magazine articles, published after the trip,

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were the first of the kind printed in America. Then as now baseball filled much space in the papers, but Mr. Needham was the first writer to introduce the subject into the magazines of general interest. I may add that he has done much since that time to keep the National Game before the magazine-reading public.

From that trip West to this day he and I have been close friends. He was on the bench with us in that memorable seventeenth-inning game when the Athletics lost the pennant to Detroit in 1909. He visited me a year later, when we collaborated on a series of baseball articles. Coming to live near Philadelphia, he became a frequent visitor at my home, as well as a regular attendant at Shibe Park. (I remember his telling me that he moved East so he could see all of our home games!) Outside my family, and of course the club, there is nobody who is so well acquainted with the game as played by the Athletics, or who so intimately understands my methods, as Henry Beach Needham. When he writes upon baseball I can find rarely anything to criticise, although he asks for the severest criticism. His articles and stories are fan-proof and diamond-wise.

In the fall of 1913 he came to my house one day with a manuscript in his hand. Until we had

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lunch, and I was feeling fairly at ease, even though we were scrapping for a pennant, he did not tell me what the typewriting was all about. Then he said to me:

“Connie, I want you to read this story—a baseball story. It’s what I’ve learned under you, used as a basis for fiction. Some of the characters you’ve met. One—Tris Ford—you’ll never admit you recognize. I’ve tried to write a baseball story that will not make the fans sore, because the technicalities of the game are wrong, and that will interest the general reader, whether he or she ever saw a game or not. Read it, please, and tell me—with brutal frankness—if I’ve delivered the lit’ry goods.”

The story, as I read the title, was “The Jinx.”

Before I say what I thought of it, right off the bat, I want to make you understand, if I can, in what attitude of mind I read that story. I knew I couldn’t make Mr. Needham believe I liked the story if I didn’t, and I knew I was going to be hard to please. A manager has to see some one hundred and fifty games a season, and while we always try to win, because we’re out to win every time, it isn’t every game, no matter how close the score, that gets us worked up and excited. Was I likely to be so over a game on paper?

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Well, the ball games described in "The Jinx" kept me guessing. To a baseball man like myself, who had read nothing but straight baseball articles, and who had in mind the players before the public to-day, it was catching me napping to spring on me a fiction story with unfamiliar names, yet with live big-league players—a story that holds your interest from beginning to end, making you sit on the edge of your easy chair while you're reading it.

I regard "The Jinx" as the best baseball story I ever read, and a wonderfully good story aside from its baseball background, if that's what you call it. The story certainly grips you, and, it strikes me, would grip a person who never goes to ball games. The absorbing interest in the hero would do that.

It's a new position for me to play—literary critic. But I have pretty strong backing in what I myself think. From the player's standpoint this is what Eddie Collins said about it:

"I do not know when I have read a story that has to do with baseball which has held my attention so undividedly. In my opinion 'The Jinx' is the best piece of baseball fiction ever written."

Governor Tener, who is president of the National League, completely enjoyed the story,

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which, he said, "furnishes fine food for fans, is clever, and must interest all who appreciate baseball fictionized."

But perhaps the most striking comment of all came from Ban Johnson, president of the American League. The writer of "The Jinx," he said, "has a keen knowledge of the whims of the average ball fan. The mystery hanging over Bill Dart, hero of the diamond, will appeal to every lover of the game."

"Mr. Needham's conception of the inside workings of a high professional club and the players' superstitions plainly show a diligent study of the subject, and are not overdrawn. We who are connected with the National Game are deeply indebted to the author for this splendid production—the best that has been offered to the fans and general readers."

This is going pretty strong, but I sincerely believe that the story deserves it.

As many know, since the early days of my management of the Athletics I have been rather partial to college men. I could, though writing is not my "natural position," turn out a whole chapter on this subject: why I like college players, why they should consider baseball as a profession—and why not? The subject I merely mention in connection with another story of this volume,

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"A Treeful of Owls." For the hero was *sent* to college.

This story brings out, incidental to the yarn, some important truths about a major-league manager's job, which is far from sitting on the bench and watching the team win—or lose—ball games. If the club wins, it's considerable more of a job than that. For a short statement summing up the manager's end of the game, it would be hard to find anything better than this, taken from the story I'm talking about:

"Tris Ford, although the ablest tactician in baseball, was at bottom a business man. Like the best merchants and manufacturers, he never failed to look ahead. He planned two, three, often four years in advance. And he went after players."

Besides, this story gives a good line on scouting—of the still hunt for "star" players (the most disappointing hunt there is), of the manner in which youngsters are often signed. On top of all this there is the Indian; and I'm partial to the Indian, too. But "The Chief" in this tale is not the player I know so well, transferred to the other end of the battery. If I were to guess, I'd say his uniform was more like that worn by the Giants. But this isn't a guessing contest, even though I am sitting now with the scribes!

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If there's one class of gentry I am dead set against it is the gamblers and camp followers who batten on the National Game, and who would destroy it, if they could, to serve their own greedy ends. That is the reason I got so wrought up over the fate of Jake Stinger in "The Double Squeeze at Villa Borghese." This is a story, however, that you can't discuss in any detail without giving the show away. As a gripping mystery tale it is second to "The Jinx," I believe.

A critic, as I understand it, is supposed to see both good and—careless plays. Which is quite enough to introduce my last time at bat. I don't like "Releasing the Film Princess" as well as the other stories. Not that the baseball human nature isn't the real article, for it is—why, I think I know where this idea came from; what club, I mean. But I have a fellow feeling for that manager, Tris Ford, who had to handle a "star" like Frank Holt. However, as it takes all kinds of ball games to make a season, so it takes this particular story, perhaps, to round out the volume.

Before closing and retiring to the bench, I want to say that, despite what is said of the grand players of the past, baseball is growing each season into a faster, a more fascinating, game. Naturally, therefore, the player is improving—

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becoming faster, more finished. The stars of to-day may be eclipsed by the stars of to-morrow. So with baseball stories. A new writer may give both fan and general reader more captivating stories than appear in this volume. But that will be day after to-morrow, in my opinion.

For the present the line-up in this book suits me, and ought to suit you—player, fan, or mother of a baseball crank. That you may forget, as did this manager, how uncomfortable you are while reading on the edge of your easy chair is the wish of

CONNIE MACK.

THE DOUBLE SQUEEZE
PART I—THE STAR'S DISAPPEARANCE

THE DOUBLE SQUEEZE

PART I—THE STAR'S DISAPPEARANCE

DOWNSTAIRS, in the visitors' room of the University Hospital, which stank of iodoform, Tris Ford, manager of the Giant-killers, waited uneasily. Upstairs, reposeful as befitted the true scientist, the resident bacteriologist squinted through his microscope. Before this revealing instrument, on a hanging drop slide, was a liquid globule of bouillon taken from a culture of typhoid bacilli.

Keenly the disease detective observed the care-free bacteria in their native sports. Some of the wrigglers indulged in a continuous round of somersaults. Others tore through space and looped the loop as though riding invisible mono-planes. Those more socially inclined tangoed in pairs. But not one bacillus was static. All were in turmoil. The culture was "good."

With almost cruel cunning the bacilian expert precipitated a tiny quantity of blood solution into a minute amount of the culture, and deftly

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transferred the combination drop to a fresh slide.

The base of the solution used was the blood of Bill Dart, pitching mainstay of the Giant-killers.

Curiously the resident bacteriologist awaited results. In five minutes there was to be noted a gradual quiescence in the movements of the wrigglers. They ceased their mad pranks and settled down as if overtaken with languor. One by one the bacilli became absolutely static, curling up in groups and going to sleep in a conglomerate mass, like so many young pups. In a quarter of an hour there was not a sign of life. The bacteriologist had brought his experiment to a successful conclusion.

An interne came to Tris Ford and reported. The manager of the Giant-killers got a dose of heavy language, in which emphasis was laid on "Widal reaction" and "positive." There was something assertively final about the surprisingly intelligible medical term "positive."

"You mean he's got it?" asked Ford.

The interne majestically inclined his head. "There is not a shadow of a doubt. A positive reaction—typhoid."

"A light or a mild case?—suppose you can't tell?"

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"Not with certainty, of course. But the bacteriologist informed me that the behaviour of the bacilli after the mixture of the blood solution and the culture would indicate a pronounced type of typhoid, probably a severe case."

"Poor Bill," said Tris, half to himself. Then in a tone of authority he addressed the interne: "Everything is to be done to make Mr. Dart comfortable and to get him well. Don't try to save a nickel. Our club will stand it. I'll call again soon. Good-day!"

Walking to the trolley, Tris Ford came to three important conclusions:

First—To count Bill Dart out for the entire season (not a fortnight old) and recast his campaign without taking his most valued pitcher into account.

Second—To write to the Surgeon General, United States Army, and learn all about the inoculation of officers and enlisted men as a preventive of typhoid fever.

Third—To go in search of Barney Larkin, who was touted as the greatest left-hander outside the breastworks of organized baseball.

Like the manager in the war game, Tris Ford believed in preparedness. He was almost invariably forearmed. But he wasn't prepared for the trick played him by a criminally negligent

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Southern city which harboured a water supply devoted to the propagation of typhoid bacilli. Otherwise he wouldn't have thought for one moment of hitching up with two yards and fifteen stone of human trouble, even though said trouble did boast a phenomenal fast ball and beautiful control—"control" not of the man, but of the ball.

Not one of the other fifteen major-league managers would have undertaken the job of handling Barney Larkin. Two had tried. It was Parke of Pittsburgh who discovered Larkin. For fully twenty-four hours after Larkin pitched his first big-league game, shutting out Cincinnati, Parke boasted of his find. Then abruptly he ceased to boast; and after two weeks, replete with excitement for the Pirates, the eccentric performer was given his unconditional release. When the parting was over, Parke made this statement:

"I've seen some grand port siders and some 'bad actors' in my day, but Barney Larkin's got 'em all beat. Curving a ball and crooking his elbow seem to be born in him. Reminds me of a famous Irishman who boasted he could fight a duel and drink a bowl of punch between thrusts. And the more he drank the harder he fought. So with Barney. He can pitch shut-out ball between drinks. The more hard liquor he puts

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away the faster his ball and the better his control. I'm not joking—drinking actually improved his pitching. But it didn't have the same effect on other players with our club—there was the devil to pay. No more Barneys for me."

Undismayed by the judgment of Parke, the manager of the Cincinnati grabbed Larkin, bragging: "Observe me—I can handle any player who isn't actually bughouse."

Balldom observed. It wasn't altogether what Barney Larkin did, although that was "a-plenty." It was what he did to the Cincinnati team. When they next appeared in the East, one of the sporting writers said that nothing so disorganized had come out of Ohio since Coxey's army. Gladly the "load of wild oats," as Barney had come to be called, was given his unconditional release.

He was now officially designated a "free agent." But where had his freedom taken him?

There was a sure way to trace Barney Larkin. He loved the spot-light; no near-statesman or Thespian of the chorus sought the bright white light more persistently. Barney was either in the newspapers or seeking to break into print. Most generally he found the scribes in a receptive frame of mind. Barney Larkin was to the sporting writers what Harry Thaw was to the sob

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artists—good for a column any dull day. And the story, nine times out of nine, got on to the wire and travelled over the country.

Tris Ford sent out an "S. O. S." to Barney Larkin, the sporting editor of the *North Star* acting as transmitter. The scribe wrote a story about Barney, rehearsing his exploits with horsehide and highball, and winding up with the query:

"Has any one seen Barney? Is he far from the madding crowds of fans, bumping along on the water wagon, or is he mixing up drinks and pitching with his old-time abandon and ne'er-failing skill? We repeat—has any one seen Barney Larkin?"

Back flew the answer: "Barney is in our midst."

It came from Punxsutawney, State of Pennsylvania.

The rest was merely the correspondence of diplomacy, at which *Tristram Carlingford* was a lineal descendant of Charles Maurice Talleyrand. The culmination was a telegram from Larkin, sent collect, reading:

"Come on and get me."

The manager of the Giant-killers took the first train for Punxsutawney, which is a borough most

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inconveniently located northeast of the Smoky City. He took with him a corpulent roll of yellow bills. Tris Ford knew that he must buy Larkin's release—not from the outlaw club, but from the tradesmen of Punxsutawney.

Up Center Street and down the shady side, Ford and Barney tramped, making more calls than the letter carrier. There were the clothier, the shoe-store man, the haberdasher, the laundry, the barber, every bar in town, and both hotels to pay, and the express company. Barney owed the express company for transportation charges on a bulldog! The one thing that saved the enterprise from complete insolvency was the departure of the daily train for Pittsburgh at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Tris Ford did not leave Punxsutawney altogether in a cheerful attitude of mind, notwithstanding he had captured his quarry, for the directors of the outlaw club came to the train in a body and thanked the big-league manager because he was taking Barney out of town. Even to the man of iron nerve this was disquieting.

In the manner told was Barney Larkin brought to the Giant-killers' ball yard. His first appearance, notably unlike most pitching inaugurals, was an unalloyed triumph.

Facing Detroit, which club was then going

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strong, he let the Tigers down without a hit. But twenty-seven men went to bat, and of these Barney struck out fifteen—a record commented upon to this day. In the last inning, with two out and that demon batsman, “the Georgia persimmon,” at bat, Barney walked toward the grand stand, stopped, and then motioned the crowd to go home. “All over!” he insisted.

The fans roared in delight—and roared louder still when he struck the champion batter out. From that moment Barney Larkin was the idol of the fans. There were times, many times, when he caused Bill Dart, who was fighting disease and death in the hospital, to be forgotten by the heartless rooter. The eccentric left-hander was keeping the Giant-killers in the hunt for the pennant.

Also, he was keeping Tris Ford awake nights. No such prize problem in manhandling had been put up to Ford in the twenty years of his management. Unerringly Tris had sized up Barney Larkin. The manager knew that whenever Barney was pitching airtight ball—mowing 'em down—it was necessary to keep an eye on him about eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; “going good,” he was most inclined to give rein to his bad habits. But when he was in a slump he was not difficult to handle. This was infre-

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quent, for he was continually leading the other pitchers in the number of games pitched and in games won.

Early in his association with Barney Larkin, the manager of the Giant-killers decided, first of all, that he must let the unruly pitcher believe he was fooling his boss. Every excuse must be accepted as the ungilded truth; otherwise Barney would have to be disciplined, and that would mean in a short time his release. Usually Tris Ford was "wise." But there was that episode in St. Louis which illuminates Barney's character, wherein Tris was fooled completely.

It was on the Giant-killers' second trip West. Barney was given an afternoon off. He went at once to a saloon near the ball park and started in by negotiating a loan of five dollars from the proprietor. After the money had gone into drink for himself and his hobo admirers, he struck the proprietor for five dollars more.

The saloonkeeper hesitated. As security for the loan Barney offered to "hang up" the gold watch fob which admiring fans had presented to him in appreciation of his mighty pitching. Giving it to the proprietor, Barney made this proposition:

"You let me have the five, which will make ten I owe you, and I'll make Tris believe I've lost

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my fob. Then he'll advertise for it and offer a reward of ten dollars."

Barney got the second five and without delay it passed over the bar to the proprietor in exchange for more liquor. Then the wild performer wandered back to the grounds. Tris Ford heard that he was outside, and, as he thought he needed a rescue pitcher to save the game, he sent for Barney. Barney came without protest and entered the clubhouse to dress. But the tide of battle turned in the Giant-killers' favour, and the left-hander was not called upon.

Shortly before the game ended, Barney Larkin came upon the field, all excitement. He rushed up to the Giant-killers' bench, exclaiming that he had lost his gold watch fob. After the last man was out Barney had twenty willing baseball workers and both umpires raking the field for the fob that the saloonkeeper was holding for a reward!

According to Barney's prophecy, Tris Ford, kind-hearted soul, advertised for the "lost" keepsake. Waiting in Chicago when the Giant-killers arrived was a telegram, charges collect, which read: "Fob found. Send on ten-dollar reward."

But it wasn't Barney's escapades that troubled the manager so much as the effect his raw be-

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haviour might have on the morale of the team. This, too, despite the acknowledged reputation enjoyed by the Giant-killers *sans* Larkin of being the cleanest and most gentlemanly bunch of ball players in the country.

The club was proud of such a reputation. This was what worried Tris Ford. He felt no anxiety lest Barney corrupt the team. What the manager expected was a call-down from his own men. Perhaps something like this:

"Look a-here, Tris! We care something for our good name if you don't. If one rotten apple will spoil the whole barrel, it's a sure thing one rounder like Barney Larkin will ruin our reputation for decency and gentlemanly conduct. Barney leaves a red trail all over the circuit, and we're getting tired of it. If you think there's nothing to our profession except winning ball games, why we'll try something else. And this goes!"

No, Tris Ford didn't want to have to answer back to unanswerable talk like that. Neither did he care to part company with Barney Larkin just yet—not while the temperamental twirler was holding the Giant-killers to the fore of the championship race and incidentally proving himself the best drawing card in the American League. If the team could be brought to look upon Barney

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as a weak brother—somebody without the pale of the Giant-killers' society—and would tolerate him for the worth of his pitching arm, the club might contrive to scale the heights and win another pennant. It was for the boys themselves to decide. Tris would have it out with them through their natural leader, Win Shute.

It has been intimated elsewhere that a good story hangs about the discovery and capture of James Winton Shute—"Win" to his team mates as to his college intimates. Suffice it that he was captain of the varsity nine at the big university, and so devoted was he to the national pastime that he was eager to cut short his collegiate training at the end of his junior year and join the Giant-killers. But Tris Ford wouldn't listen to it. He insisted that James Winton finish his education; and ever after, when Shute considered his bachelor of arts degree with pride and satisfaction, he never failed to thank Tris Ford for his part in the capture of it. Ford alone could have kept the budding ball player in college.

Two years after graduation Shute was a regular on the Giant-killers' team, playing second base. He was batting well over .300 and covering second as though he had invented the position and was continually improving his invention. He had earned the sobriquet of the "pepper

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box," for the obvious reason that he infused life and go into the club. He was in the game every minute, playing always for the team, never for himself.

And—his lips had never known the taste of liquor, as Ira Landis oratorically said one time at a public banquet; neither did the great second sacker smoke. No wonder Tris Ford looked upon him as a model ball player and sought his counsel. James Winton Shute sat at the manager's right at the meetings of the Strategy Board.

Events hastened Tris Ford's consultation with Win Shute about Barney. First of all, Shute was suffering the tortures of Job with a nasty boil on his groin—the one spot where such an affliction can most harass an active ball player. Tris Ford, sympathetic to a fault, had told Win to stay out of the game.

"With the team in a batting slump, the pitching staff wabbly, and a lead of less than two games? Not on your life, Tris! You may get the umpire to order me off the field, but I'll not quit for anybody else—get that?"

This gingery dialogue took place in Chicago. Three days later Barney Larkin failed to show up the afternoon he was down to pitch. Hawk, who didn't have the stuff, tried to fill the south-

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paw's shoes, and the Giant-killers were beaten—trounced three games out of four in the series.

Getting back from the grounds, the team found Barney in the hotel lobby, mixing it up with the hotel porter, a friendly soul, who had tried to lure the "full" pitcher into the privacy of his bedroom. At sight of Tris Ford, Barney sobered up temporarily and lurched into the elevator—and heavily against Win Shute.

It was the much-advertised last bale of straw. Barney's kicking over the traces and upsetting the chariot of victory in such a crisis was too much for James Winton Shute. He spoke his mind:

"If Ford doesn't tie a can to you to-morrow, the so-called hundred-thousand-dollar infield will look like a plugged nickel. Barney, you're not worth a damn to anybody but the undertaker—and he'd be taking a long chance, for I don't know who'd give up a dollar to bury you. You're nothing but an ordinary bum."

There was a split second when it appeared likely that Barney would strike Shute. Tris Ford, who had crowded into the elevator unseen at the last moment, scenting trouble, contrived to worm his way in front of Barney. He gripped the pitcher's wrists and held them like a vise. The danger was averted. But that evening after dinner, when Shute was sitting in his room

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reading, the manager came to him and unbosomed himself. Together they discussed Barney's peculiar case from every possible viewpoint.

"You put him in his right class—a bum," began Tris.

"But I oughtn't have said it," admitted Win.

"Never mind about that—you were justified in saying 'most anything—you playing for the club when you should be in bed."

"Cut that out, Tris! I want the pennant—want to get into the World Series money again—you know it."

"So do we all of us," agreed Ford.

"And there'll be no pennant this season if we can Barney Larkin—that's a cinch." Tris Ford suppressed a sigh of pure relief. He now ventured to remark:

"If you boys want me to let Barney go, why—he goes! You won't have to say the word twice. It's up to you."

"We can't win without him—you appreciate that, Tris. He's a weakling, and we've got to get along with him somehow or other."

James Winton Shute exercised his gray matter for a brief space of time; then his face brightened, and he proposed:

"Have a scheme—why not appoint a keeper for Barney?"

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"A keeper?" Tris smiled, but shook his head.

"Some one to look after him—never leave him a minute, 'cept when he's snoring," elaborated Shute.

"'Fraid he wouldn't stand for it," argued Tris; "and if he did, in a week he'd lead his keeper astray."

Win laughed. "But you don't quite get me. Barney mustn't be wise to this keeper, and the keeper must be firewater proof."

"I got you—but where'd you find the man?"

"Right in our squad—Steadman—young giant left-hander we have."

"But I'm going to send him to the minors, to keep the squad down to twenty-five men." This was the league's rule—from May 15 to August 15.

"You *were* going to," corrected Shute with a grin; "but on second guess you've decided to keep him here to learn the pitching art from Barney Larkin—greatest left-hander of his generation."

Tris Ford flashed his smile of understanding. Then he asked:

"Why do you pick Steadman for the job of keeper?"

"Because he doesn't drink a drop, because in a scuffle he's heavy and strong enough to take care

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of Barney and put him to sleep, because Barney likes him, and because they have a great common bond."

"A common bond?" Tris looked incredulous.

"Sure—they're both disciples of Isaak Walton."

"You mean——"

"They'll fish all day, both of them, without getting a single bite, and go home happy at night."

"Say, I'll stock a trout pond near the ball park and build Barney a bungalow on the shore," said Tris.

Player and manager laughed with the fervour of a couple of kids.

"I'll revise my list and hold on to Steadman," promised Ford.

"If you say so," said Win, "I'll coach the youngster in his new position. Next to Barney, he likes me better, I think, than any man on the club."

"Next to Barney?" questioned Tris.

"Yes; I don't fish."

And thus, to the surprise of the catching force, was Earnest Steadman retained with the Giant-killers. Two men only, Tris Ford and Win Shute, shared Steadman's secret that he was officially the weakling's keeper. Steadman stuck to Barney Larkin closer than a brother.

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"Damon and Piscatorius," Shute had dubbed the pair. And, kept fairly well in leash, Barney Larkin was a big factor in the winning of many a ball game.

Before the season was embalmed in the *Official Baseball Guide*, Tris Ford exhibited the first signs of age. Long, lean, and immobile, never batting an eye in the most trying situations, he had been wont to follow the game from the dugout. A fiction there was that he signalled with his score card; but otherwise he was as impassive as the copperhead on a penny—until the homestretch of this nerve-breaking season. Then, as the scribes put it, he began to act like an ordinary, flesh-and-blood human being. He moved uneasily upon the bench, sometimes signalled brazenly to a player, and was occasionally known to give vent to disappointment or disgust by actually slapping his knee in public. He was not the same Tris Ford—not by an obstreperous nervous system.

But who, save a block of *lignum-vitæ*, wouldn't have allowed his deep concern to be occasionally seen? From the middle of August, when the Western clubs made their last journey East, the Giant-killers were scheduled, week after week, to "blow"—that is, to drop back in the race. This disaster threatened many times. Once the

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team was two full games behind the Red Sox, then leaders; but lowly Washington surprised the President, the Vice-President, Senators, and Congressmen by beating the Speed Boys four straight, and thus taking second place. Colaterally, the Senators helped the Giant-killers back into first position.

Came the very last week of the season with more excitement than the nation's fans had ever experienced. The pennants in both the major leagues were in doubt! The Giants, expected to "repeat" and again participate in the World Series, were to engage in a cutthroat struggle with the Phillies. If New York broke even, the championship banner would again float from the Giants' stadium. But if the Phillies won three out of four, then Father Penn would carry off the flag. This series opened on Tuesday.

In the American the Giant-killers had to keep ahead to win. A game and a half separated Tris Ford's charges from the Chicago White Sox. Here, however, there was no rival clash. The two clubs had met for the last time, and honours were even. Washington must beat the Giant-killers and Chicago must win from Detroit in order to bring one end of the World Series into Lakeville. These two "deciding" combats began a day later.

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The fan's diary had these entries:

Tuesday night—Phillies and New York tied in the National.

Wednesday night—Giant-killers still a game and a half ahead in the American; New York leading in the National.

Thursday before dinner—Teams tied again in the National; but a half game between Giant-killers and White Sox in the American.

Friday night—Phillies win the pennant!

On the same day the Giant-killers, with Barney Larkin on the rubber, defeated the Senators while the White Sox were whitewashing the Tigers. No change in their respective standing—two leading American League teams but half a game apart.

Immediately after the third game Tris Ford took Barney Larkin into his private office and talked to him as a father to his wild son. He rallied every ounce of manliness, of sentiment, of fighting blood there was in the eccentric left-hander. He told him he must face Washington again the next day—and bring home the bacon. The pennant was at stake!

"You will be a hero if you win," urged Ford, "pointed out by everybody as the man who pitched the Giant-killers to another championship. But if you lose, why—you'll be nobody."

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Meanwhile, James Winton Shute was giving orders to Earnest Steadman, just as the Secretary of the Treasury would have directed the Chief of the Secret Service.

"You mustn't lose sight of Barney one instant! If he insists on drinking, start a row, and get locked up—the both of you. We'll bail you out, but only in time to get from City Hall to the park in a taxi. See!"

Earnest Steadman slowly nodded his head. "I have been every place but in jail with Barney." The keeper was a man of few words.

That night Tris Ford slept badly. Being younger and having done a big man's work out o' doors, Win Shute slept like a babe—the kind of kid you read about. Naturally Tris awoke with a feeling of depression, as if the Giant-killers weren't going to get the day's breaks. But Shute jumped out of bed singing: "To-day we win the bunting!" Which goes to prove that premonitions are closely allied to the "morning after."

At two o'clock that fateful afternoon, when the last man left the locker-room for the field, Barney Larkin and Earnest Steadman had not reported at the park. For an hour, by order of Tris Ford, President Benn's limousine had been rushing about like a hack on election day, searching everywhere for the missing pair. In the business

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office the club's secretary had the telephone directory before him, open at Saloons and Cafés, and one after another the proprietors were called, beginning with Aiello, Michele, and ending with Zbytniewski, Julian. Neither Michele nor Julian, not to mention the rum purveyors occupying the more intermediate portions of the alphabetical directory, had seen the erratic Barney or his slow-going convoy.

On another telephone, Win Shute, marring the oak furniture with his spikes, was calling the various police stations. He remembered his final instructions to Steadman, and was looking for results. But Larkin was not behind the bars—not yet. As a place of last resort, John Benn suggested that some one telephone the morgue. Some one did. “No one answering the description!”

“He’s made his getaway,” said Tris Ford, “there’s nothing to that.” The game was played with Cummins and Arrow in the points. Washington won.

Tris Ford left the grounds with a face as long as a rainy spell in April. But Win Shute was cheerful. An hour later he telephoned the manager:

“White Sox lose! Pennant’s ours. Hoo-ray!”

“I know it—but what d’you s’pose has become of Barney?” were Ford’s words. Already

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his quick mind was looking ahead—to the big battle for the World's emblem.

"He'll show up to-morrow—stop worrying and hug yourself to-night, Tris," counselled Shute.

"Well, I appreciate your grand work, Win—on and off the field," said Tris.

Next morning before ten o'clock, his eye bright, his complexion clear, his step elastic, Barney Larkin turned up at the Park. He grinned as he remarked:

"*We* won the flag, sure enough; am I right?"

"Where you been?" growled John Benn, son of the club's president.

"Up State," answered Barney unconcernedly.

"What the devil you been doing?"

"Fishing."

"Fishing—this time of year?"

"Didn't catch nothing."

"You'll catch something when Tris sets eyes on you."

"Mebbe."

Barney took the most comfortable chair in the room, bit off a generous chew of tobacco, then picked up last night's pink extra, and began laboriously to spell out the "Flashes from the Diamond."

Elsewhere, Earnest Steadman was explaining to his mentor, James Winton Shute. It appeared

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that Barney had developed a robust thirst, which would not be denied. Lacking confidence in the jail as a haven, the worried keeper, drawing heavily on his meagre imagination, had faked the story of a marvellous trout pond up State. In the crisis he conjured up such a remarkable picture of the pond, which was "lousy with trout," as he expressed it, that Barney was seized with a sudden determination to go thither.

"I tried to make him wait until the pennant was cinched," explained Steadman, "but he said he always pitched better ball on a bellyful of trout. Thought I planned it to get back in time for yesterday's game."

"But I thought this was a phony pond?" said Shute.

"It was—the one I told Barney about. But I hunted up the nearest one in the summer tour book of the Pennsy."

"Why didn't you get back?" demanded Win.

"Because Barney wouldn't come until he had one bite—kept putting off starting until, he says, 'one speckled beauty rises to my fly.' None riz."

"You must have picked a fine pond," said Shute.

"I did. They's an intake there from a cam-a-bear cheese factory and it's killed all the fish."

When Win Shute talked with Tris Ford over

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the telephone about the disappearance, reappearance, and "fool explanation," Tris replied:

"Well, we've won the pennant, and they're here. What we got to figure on now is so's it won't happen again. Want to talk over the World Series with you."

There was an entirely new element in the approaching blue-ribbon event. Of course the Giant-killers to a man wanted to win. It meant perhaps fifteen hundred dollars more money in each player's jeans. It meant, also, to continue to be known and pointed out as World Champions. And the club owners were out to win—keen to win. First and foremost for the glory of it. Then for the prestige it would give the Giant-killers all over the league circuit—rather, which they would continue to enjoy another season. There was a third reason, a very important reason.

Not once before in the thirty-five years of the club's existence had the Phillies won a pennant. Yet within ten years pennant winning had become something of a habit with the Giant-killers. Naturally, therefore, they had the call on the patronage of Father Penn's home town, having commanded popular favour for a number of seasons. This popularity was now in jeopardy. If the Phillies demonstrated that they were the better team, then the fans would turn to the new

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kings of baseball the next season. For the fan dearly loves a winner.

On form—relying on the weak brother, Barney Larkin—the Giant-killers looked to have a shade the best of the argument. This being so, why were the Phillies the favourites in the betting? Even money was at first the rule. But over in New York the gamblers soon had the odds hammered down until the Nationals were favourites at 10 to 6.

Gambling Tris Ford abhorred, regarding it as the ever-present menace to the integrity of the national game; and if he thought a man, however prominent, or important, was seeking a line on the Giant-killers as a guide in betting, Tris would shut up like a steel trap. It wasn't the betting itself, but the information behind the odds, that troubled him.

It did not surprise him—why, he did not know—when he received a letter, special delivery, from the sporting editor of one of the New York papers. The man who wrote it loved fair play and clean sport, and looked upon Tris Ford as the apostle of the one and the exponent of the other. The letter read:

In this town the gamblers are plunging on the Phillies. Regardless of form, your club is being forced

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down steadily in the betting. Jake Stinger and other big gamblers don't look upon this betting proposition as a "game of chance," not they. Gambling to them on such a scale means a sure thing. It is no secret on the inside. They say you have only one pitcher who can stop the Phillies, now at the top of their batting, and that is Barney Larkin. *They boast that they have got him.*

Take this for what it's worth. You doubtless know Larkin—but I know Stinger's crowd. They are betting on a sure thing, or else somebody is fooling them most awfully. Anyhow, look out. Good luck.

After reading this letter to Win Shute, Tris Ford observed: "There's something behind those long odds—I've thought so right along."

"You don't think they could bribe Barney? With all his vices he wouldn't sell out, would he?" asked Win rather anxiously.

"Not for one minute," said Tris positively. "Money means nothing to him—leastwise, a great deal of money. I keep his coin for him—deal it out in small bits. I find he's as pleased over a two-dollar bill as he is over a five. And a tenner looks to him like Rockefeller's dividends for a whole day!

"The money end of it don't worry me," Tris repeated.

"Then what is bothering you?"

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The manager of the Giant-killers hesitated, his expression becoming abnormally serious. "I don't know that I ought to speak of it even—it might get the idea started, if it hasn't already."

"What idea?" almost snapped Win Shute. "What's on your chest? If it's something threatening, we ought to plan to beat it. Tell me!"

Tris showed his anxiety in his face.

"Kidnapping!—that's what I'm afraid of," he whispered to Win Shute.

"Kidnapping Barney Larkin? They'd have to bind and gag his giant keeper first."

"Oh, they'd manage that if they set out to try," said Tris gloomily.

James Winton Shute fell back on his gray matter. Then came the beam of dawning solution.

"We'll put some one to watch the keeper that watches the victim," he said.

"Who?"

"The best detective we can get in the city, with two strong-arm boys for a bodyguard."

And they did. Unknown to Barney Larkin, his piscatorial friend, Earnest Steadman, sat in front of his bedroom door, keeping watch. Unknown to Larkin and Steadman, downstairs the cleverest detective in the city kept vigil, reinforced by two able diamonds in the rough, very rough.

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In his home, not three blocks away, Tris Ford tossed on the bed, unable to sleep. He had a vague feeling of impending disaster.

The day of the first game of the World Series, all Philadelphia's own, was clear and mild, built to order by the gods for the American Olympian. There were crowds of hilarious people, parades, music, and speculation—both idle talk and money talk. The odds closed 10 to 6 on the Phillies. If rumour was right, this was portentous.

Tris Ford deserted his private office shortly after high noon, and went to the locker-room—an unheard-of proceeding for him. Then he waited round impatiently. On the dot, as the clock pointed to 12.30, a triumphal procession moved ceremoniously into the presence of the chief of the Giant-killers.

At its head was Barney Larkin, a smile upon his boyish face and a cocky look in his eye that brought joy and comfort to the manager. Close behind was Earnest Steadman, also smiling. Next came an inconspicuous citizen, easily mistaken for a prosperous travelling man—the clever detective. Bringing up the rear were two low-browed fellows—either pugilists in ordinary or highly efficient piano shifters.

Tris Ford laughed. He couldn't help it.

Although the team, with one exception, was

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not a party to the deep, dark secret, the players plainly shared the relief which Tris Ford experienced at sight of Barney Larkin. They sang as they put on their uniforms, and one would have supposed, to look in upon them, that they were preparing for morning practice in the training season, instead of getting ready to fight for the highest honours of the town—and the popularity of the home town.

Wild tumult broke loose at sight of the Giant-killers, answering the yell which had gone up on the appearance of the Phillies. There were the usual preliminaries—all before the camera. There was snappy practice by the Nationals. Then the Giant-killers took the field, to limber up and get their grip on the ball and sure fire into their throws.

“Hit ’er out!”

An acute-sighted fan jumped up in his place back of first, and ignoring the shouts of “Down in front!” scanned the playing field from a point near second base to the Giant-killers’ bench much as an anxious mother would look for her lost child. Then in agonized accents he demanded of space:

“Where’s Win Shute?”

Eyes by the thousand travelled to the edge of the clay-base path in right. There an uneasy

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substitute was trying his hardest to accomplish the impossible—fill the spiked shoes of the king of second basemen.

What on the terrestrial ball did it mean? Was Tris Ford crazy?

Tardily, fifteen minutes after the hour set for the game to begin, the official announcer raised his megaphone and sing-songed the opposing batteries. The fans howled with delight when they heard that Barney Larkin was to pitch for the Giant-killers, although they knew it, of course. But when the announcer added that Pervis was to "play second base in place of Shute," the fans gave loud vent to their disapproval. "What's the matter—Win Shute hurt?" they shrieked.

Around the vast assemblage, starting in the press box, flying through the grand stand, leaping to the pavilions, reaching at last to the bleachers, sped the answer:

"He's disappeared!"

Gloom, impenetrable gloom, settled down upon a majority of the great throng—those who had come to help the Giant-killers win. Their quick minds were recalling what the rival manager, John Marlin, had given out after the Giant-killers downed New York. They remembered every word of it:

"I want to go on record as saying that Shute

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is the greatest ball player in the world. He wins more games for his club than any other man on the diamond to-day—and winning games is what counts in baseball. He was directly responsible for two of the games which his team won from us, and was there all the time in the other two victories. In defensive work he was easily the king-pin, breaking up our defence and making sensational plays around second base. The record shows that he led his own team in the attack. I say again—Shute is the greatest ball player in the world. With him no major-league team would be weak—without him the best team would be seriously crippled.”

Seriously crippled!

Over in New York a few feet away from the ticker, which was announcing the beginning of play, Jake Stinger and his friends were already celebrating.

PART II—AT SEA

AN UNSHAVEN, dishevelled young man, hatless but otherwise completely dressed down to his shoes, turned over on the bed, opened his sticky eyes, then closed and dug his fists into them to dissipate the heaviness of the lids. He tried vainly to moisten his parched lips with his swollen tongue.

His nose itched tormentingly, and he rubbed it vigorously with the back of his hand.

As consciousness returned, haltingly and with brief lapses into stupor, his brain and the senses of taste, smell, and sight began to correlate, slowly but accurately—due to the native resilience of an unabused constitution.

A peculiar taste in his mouth he couldn't label. To one whose lips had never "known the taste of liquor" it was indescribable—indescribably bad, nauseating.

But the smell that rose from some part of his clothing he recognized. It was the repellent odour that exuded from a saloon when the rubber-tired doors swung open. It was stale liquor!

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And it had been spilled on *his* clothes. Following this loathsome discovery, he raised his hand toward his nose and again he was startled to get another whiff of stale liquor. A shudder of disgust passed through him. He now took a second invoice of the taste in his mouth and classified it as "dark brown." But not yet could he bring his logy mentality to take up the trail from effect back to cause.

His bed next attracted his attention. It was narrow—much like a shelf with a wooden side to prevent one's falling out. Looking up, he saw above him what, judging from the woven-wire springs, was another narrow bed. The furnishings of the apartment or cell, whatever it was, all tethered to something permanent, were at first unfamiliar to him. It was the aperture admitting the light that helped him to fix the room and its location. This round opening to the outside world was a bull's-eye of thick glass. And as he stared through the circular window on to grayness—nothing more—there came a loud thump, instantly followed by a stinging sound, as if minute pebbles had been thrown against the glass fiercely. Then water ran off, leaving the bull's-eye flecked with drops.

His mind bridged the gap between present predicament and past experience. He recalled

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the Giant-killers' trip to Cuba after they had worsted the Cubs—the days on the high and low seas. He knew now. He was aboard ship!

Secure in this conclusion, he brought himself to a sitting posture on the edge of the berth. In an upright position he found that he was inclined to dizziness. But he fought it off, got to his feet, and, letting down the washbasin, soused his head in cold water—all the water the tank contained. This revived him wonderfully.

He looked about the stateroom more carefully. There was a suitcase of real leather on the bunk under the porthole. He was positive that he had never seen it before. Turning it round, he found on the end, in black lettering, the inscription:

<p>S. W. JAMES New York</p>
--

"S.-W.-J-a-m-e-s?" he questioned. He recalled all the Jameses he had ever heard of—there weren't many—from "Cyclone," the Yankee pitcher, who had struck him out twice in one game, to Jesse and Henry—train robber and author respectively. There was no "S. W." in the list.

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Mechanically he tried the bag to see if it was locked. It opened, displaying a complete assortment of linen and underclothing. There were shirts, collars, handkerchiefs, stockings, brush and comb—everything necessary, with the suit he had on, to enable him to make a respectable appearance. The things had been carefully selected and they were all new. But there wasn't a scrap of writing to identify their owner.

This turned his attention to his own means of identification. Putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out four envelopes. Three of them were addressed to S. W. James, Hotel Longacre, New York City. Two of the envelopes contained bills—one an "account rendered" from a liquor dealer for \$67.25; the other a bill for cigars and cigarettes amounting to \$23.50. The third was a letter from the steamship agents of the Ham-bard Line, reading:

DEAR SIR: We have booked you for passage from New York to Naples on the *S. S. Colonia*, sailing from pier foot of West Thirteenth Street, N. R. We have assigned to you Cabin C 39, on the salon deck, and have arranged that you are to have it entirely to yourself.

We beg to call your attention to the fact that, owing to the tide on the day of departure, the *Colonia* will sail at one o'clock in the morning, October 7.

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The fourth envelope enclosed a ticket calling for one first-class passage, New York to Naples, on the steamship *Colonia*, and made out to S. W. James. There was nothing else in the pockets of his coat.

His gold watch was ticking in the pocket of his vest. Attached to it was a narrow black silk ribbon—the useful portion of a watch fob. But the ornamental part of the fob—the solid gold baseball, surmounted by two tiny crossed bats of platinum, emblematic of the World's Championship—that was missing.

Robbed! was his first thought, and he searched in his trousers pocket for the cash which he had with him—less than ten dollars. He found many yellow-backed bills. Five hundred dollars!

In any sudden lapse into unconsciousness the first faculty to give way is the memory—that is, the mental process of storing facts and impressions ceases. So, also, in returning consciousness the memory has a trick oftentimes of beginning where it left off or of seizing upon some one thing in particular to locate its bearings. The sight of the five hundred dollars immediately brought to mind what had happened before the long, dreamless sleep just ended on the ship. This money—or five hundred dollars just like it—was lying on a table in a suite of rooms in the

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Belmont-Stratworth Hotel. He was about to come into possession of it—all for signing a contract to report the World Series on behalf of the Transcontinental Newspaper Syndicate, Metropolitan Tower, New York City.

He sat down again upon the berth to puzzle it out, beginning with the letter from the syndicate—it was on engraved stationery, he remembered. The secretary, Walter Noble, gave him as references three well-known New Yorkers. But the letter had come, special delivery, on Sunday—the day after the championship was cinched—and reply was requested by telegraph on Monday. Anyhow, what need was there of references, he had argued, when he couldn't lose! For he was to receive five hundred dollars on the signing of the contract and two hundred dollars every day he turned in a story. No, he couldn't lose, and he could make thirteen hundred dollars at least—nineteen hundred dollars at most. Yes, he had looked upon it as "very easy" money and had kept his own counsel, not even confiding in Tris Ford, because of the reports in the newspapers that the National Commission was to prohibit the players from writing for the papers; certainly all those who hadn't contracts.

There was a day's delay in Noble's coming over, he recalled. The secretary of the Trans-

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continental Syndicate had come—he rubbed his head in bewilderment. When was it? How long had he slept? Yesterday—it must have happened yesterday—last night!

He remembered that he had gone to the Belmont-Stratworth, and the clerk at the desk knew him—had seen him play. He could repeat his words: “Mr. Noble is expecting you—go right up to Suite 1142.” He had gone up, had been admitted to the parlour of a suite, and had met a nice young fellow, obviously a gentleman, who greeted him cordially. This Mr. Noble not only knew baseball and ball players, but they had friends in common. So they had enjoyed a very nice chat—all before the contract was produced.

The contract—it had the name of the Transcontinental Newspaper Syndicate printed in, he was sure. He had read it very carefully, and the terms were precisely what had been offered him. While he was reading it, he remembered, Mr. Noble had taken from his bill case without any flourish five hundred dollars. He could remember seeing the money lying on the table, the bills folded over once.

The bills in his hand now were folded once!

But something was going wrong with his memory. It had been spinning the tale of events

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without effort, but suddenly it had begun to flag. He had to prod it. What was it Mr. Noble had said? Oh, yes—"I'm going to have a drink. What'll you have?" He had declined, of course, because he didn't drink. And then? Mr. Noble had said, walking over to the telephone: "Wise man—wish I didn't," and had added: "I'll order you a soft drink."

The drink—what was it? For some reason he was very uncertain on that score. Slowly he began to form a mental image of it—a brown bottle—it was in a silver holder, because the bottom was round. Of course—ginger ale!—it came in such bottles. He remembered, too, it was imported ginger ale, not so sweet as American. Yes, the first taste had been almost bitter. And then?

Blackness! He could recall nothing, try his best, until he woke up on the ship.

It didn't accord with any experience he knew at all well—of course not with any he had ever gone through himself. He couldn't believe that he had taken an alcoholic drink by mistake unless it had been very thoroughly disguised. The odour from his clothes tended to prove that he had, but his reason told him otherwise. Nothing remained, therefore, but to conclude that he had been given a knockout!

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As the only bit of documentary evidence in his possession, the letter from the steamship company seemed to impel his attention. He read it over again, and the last sentence, in its full significance, made him start:

"The *Colonia* will sail at one o'clock in the morning, October 7."

October 7! There was a feeling of depression at the pit of his stomach. It was not due to seasickness. The heartbreaking realization of his situation had come at last. With the Giant-killers fighting for the victory that meant everything to players, manager, and club owners, the team's second baseman, regarded by many as "the king-pin of the defence, the leader of the offence," was far from the scene of combat, probably bound for Naples! Even though there certainly had been no malice prepense on his part, he was a deserter, nothing better, for the World Series was to start this day!

He looked at his watch. Twelve o'clock, noon! In thirty minutes the team, every man of the squad, was expected to report at the ball park. In thirty minutes! Where was he now? James Winton Shute rang the bell to find out.

The steward came promptly, a smile that was both knowing and respectful upon his face. He spoke with marked cordiality.

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"Mr. James—good morning, sir. 'Ope you are feeling better, sir."

"My name is Shute—good morning."

"Mr. Shute—very well, sir." The steward puckered his lips.

"Where are we now?"

"About one hundred and fifty miles out, sir."

"Out?—you mean from land?"

"From New York, sir."

"I've got to get off! Where's the captain? He'll have to stop the boat!"

The steward placed a soothing hand upon the passenger's shoulder. "I'd lie down if I were you, sir, and rest a little more—get your sea legs on, Mr. James."

Without taking notice of the persistent error in nomenclature, Win Shute announced: "I'm going to see the captain. Where is he?"

"On the bridge, sir."

"Take me to him!" His inflection compelled obedience.

Once in a championship game Win Shute had worked the pitcher for a free pass in first, had stolen second and then third, and when the pitcher was winding up had raced home, hooking his leg over the plate and eluding the catcher who tried to put the ball on him. This is the only explanation that can be offered why and how "Mr. S. W.

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James" succeeded in getting to the captain on the bridge. The governor-general of the ship was so surprised that he didn't ask the determined-looking young man how he had managed it. "Captain, my name is Shute—mostly called Win Shute."

The captain nodded, but without a glimmer of understanding.

"You've probably heard of the World Series—championship of the big leagues?"

"American baseball?"

"Yes—games to decide the best ball team in the world," explained Win eagerly.

"What of it?" was the captain's rejoinder.

"This," said Shute, pausing for emphasis: "I'm the second baseman, heavy hitter, and leading base runner on one of the teams—the Giant-killers, folks call us."

"What of that?" varied the captain. His tone was not unkind, but he showed a wretched lack of interest.

"First game's to-day—in two hours."

"I take it you are not going to play." There was amusement in the captain's eyes.

"Not play? I've got to play!"

The captain looked at him searchingly, shook his head, and turned his eyes to the sea.

"Captain, you don't appreciate what this means—not to me alone, but to our club and to

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the fans of our city. Why, it's the biggest event of the year. I *got* to be there."

There was another scrutinizing look from the master of the vessel, who said nothing.

"How can I get you to stop the ship?"

The captain smiled. "If you pressed me for an answer, I should have to say that you couldn't get me to stop the ship."

"For whom would you stop her?"

"The officers of the line," replied the captain, smiling amiably.

"Very well, then," said Win quietly, "you'll get orders from the Hambard Line to stop her. See you later, Captain."

The steward, in the expectant attitude of a curious person anticipating trouble, was surprised when "Mr. James," who wanted to be called Mr. Shute, returned from his encounter with the captain in perfect composure, though a trifle hurried. He plucked the steward by the arm, and again spoke authoritatively:

"Now take me to the wireless operator—and what's his name?"

"Mr. Mansel—Jerrold Mansel. You may 'ave 'eard of 'im, sir."

"Mansel? Not Jed Mansel, the man who saved the steamship *Regent*?"

"Yes, sir, the hoperator who saved the *Regent*."

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'E's not the regular 'wireless' on this ship—our regular's sick, and Mansel is making the voyage for 'im, sir."

The quarters of the wireless operator were temporarily unoccupied, however. The "Hero of the *Regent*" was not at his post of duty.

"'E might be at luncheon, sir, or shaving for luncheon," volunteered the steward; "or 'e might be taking 'is exercise."

"We've got to find him *quick*," insisted Shute.

They didn't. It was after much searching that they came upon the operator.

Jed Mansel was seated in an inconspicuous corner of the library, engaged in what seemed to be an intimate conversation with an uncommonly pretty girl. After pointing him out, the steward made a hasty retreat. Win Shute didn't lose a moment's time.

"Pardon me for butting in—but are you the wireless operator of the ship?"

Mansel scowled and nodded impatiently.

"I want to send a message, please."

"I'll be in my room on the boat deck in about fifteen minutes." And Jed Mansel turned to the pretty girl.

"Fifteen minutes won't do," said Shute positively. "I must get it right off—it's very important."

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Mansel was inclined to put up an argument, but a certain look in the eye of James Winton Shute—that or something else—caused him to think better of it.

“An S. O. S. from duty, Miss Riley. May I hope to see you after luncheon?”

“You may hope,” she replied half jestingly, and turned to select a book.

Jed Mansel laid the course, but Win Shute set the pace.

This was the wireless message which was given to the operator of the steamship *Colonia* to transmit to the nearest station in the United States:

TRIS FORD, Philadelphia:

Was probably drugged last night and carried aboard steamship *Colonia*, Hambard Line. We are one hundred and fifty miles out New York, bound Naples. Have officers line wireless captain to stop ship and you send fast boat for me. Well and able to play.

SHUTE.

“How long will it take you to get that off?” inquired Win.

“Can’t say—no telling how long it’ll take to raise ’em.”

“I’ll wait,” said Shute.

“Hope you don’t expect to land in time for today’s game?” joked Jed Mansel.

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Win Shute didn't smile. He came back strong: "You speed up that machine so there'll be no delay starting that relief ship. To-day won't decide the series. There's a ball game to-morrow—just as important."

It was an hour before the wireless operator reported that the message had been transmitted to the shore. He then announced that he was going to lunch.

"But how about the reply? Who'll be here to receive it?"

"It'll be two hours at least before we get an answer," said Mansel. "If you'll pardon me, you'd better get something to eat, too. You can't play ball on an empty stomach, you know," he added jestingly.

An hour later Jed Mansel returned and found the persistent passenger waiting at his cabin door. Slowly a half-hour passed.

"Can't you raise 'em?" asked Win impatiently.

"Here comes something," said the operator encouragingly. After much clicking, Mansel shook his head. "Sorry, but it's not for you."

He was an endlessly long time receiving and transcribing the message. Then he summoned a deck steward and told him to find Miss Riley and give her the Marconigram.

"Repeat my message," ordered Shute, "word

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for word. Here's for both." He paid the operator with a yellow-backed bill.

Four times that afternoon the wireless operator repeated at twenty-five cents a word, including the address and signature, the message to Tris Ford. But there was no reply. Win was getting desperate, and showed it, when the operator remarked:

"Here's something—mebbe this is it."

Win braced up. But after a bit of the metallic chattering, Mansel again shook his head. "Not for you—for the captain."

"For the captain?" Win's tone was eager. "That's the stuff!" He was thinking of orders from the officers of the line.

The operator transcribed the message, put it in an envelope, and went off to deliver it himself. When he came back he confided the information: "I'm going to send a message from the captain—about you." That was all, but it raised the wavering spirits of the young man who would not leave the upper deck.

There was another tedious delay. Finally, along about five o'clock, there were the auditory evidences of the approach of a winged message. Then further delay while the wireless operator played his important part in the space-conquering trick.

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"Sorry, but it's not for you. For the captain again," he volunteered.

"Might be just as good," said Win, "perhaps better."

The operator didn't reply. He went away to deliver the message and was gone "ages." Returning, he informed the "good waiter" that the captain would like to see him.

Win Shute was off to the bridge as he might have started for second. High ran his hopes. He could almost feel the ship slowing down!

The captain invited him into the chart room and closed the door. Without a word he handed him a Marconigram, which ran:

CAPTAIN, S. S. "COLONIA":

Must be some mistake. Our player Shute here in game to-day.

TRIS FORD.

After reading it over a second time to make sure, the captain's visitor, shaking his head doggedly, spoke in no uncertain voice:

"The *mistake* is in *this message*. Tris Ford *never* sent it."

"Why not?" asked the captain indulgently.

"Why not? It shows on its face why not. It says I was in the game to-day. And I'm on this ship!"

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"Sit down," said the captain, who paused until his invitation had been accepted. "Mr. James——"

"My name isn't James—it's Shute."

"Well, then, Mr. Shute, if you prefer it," said the captain, wishing to humour his guest, "I have made a careful inquiry about you. Your room steward reports, and the quartermaster on duty at the gangway confirms it, that you came aboard intoxicated—I may say, were *brought* aboard *drunk*."

"It's a lie! Was never drunk in my life—never took a drop of liquor in my life. What happened, I was given a knockout!—brought aboard drugged."

The captain appeared puzzled, then continued: "I hardly think so, Mr. James——"

"Shute!"

"—Mr. Shute. The ship's doctor examined you, at the request of your friends, after you were assisted aboard. He reports that he found you in an advanced state of intoxication. Your friends said that you had been celebrating unwisely before sailing."

"I tell you it's a lie!"

"Mr. Shute, if you are not inclined to take my view of this unfortunate circumstance, you will have to be sent where you will be looked after.

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Not infrequently, I regret to say, young, full-blooded fellows like yourself, and occasionally older birds, come aboard with so much extra baggage that a good night's rest does not set them up. They have what is popularly called a 'hangover.' Sometimes they are quarrelsome, sometimes—out of their heads. Once in a while a fellow comes powerful near having the d. t.'s. But the steward in charge of the hospital knows how to take care of them—he's an old hand at it. You will find him quite capable, I assure you."

"Me? What d'you mean?"

"I mean that if you don't stop your nonsense and behave yourself, I will order you to the hospital. Good morning."

Win Shute had never been put out of a game in his life. He eyed the "umpire" of the high seas critically and turned to go. But, like the average ball player, he couldn't leave the "field" without the last word.

"Captain, you've got me—I acknowledge that. And I'm not going to make any trouble for you—not while you're managing the ship. But once we strike dry land I promise you I'll start a brand of trouble that will bring up on this boat. I've been drugged—I repeat it. And

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there's been the dirtiest kind of a frame-up against me. What's more, that message you hold in your hand is a pure fake. Either the man who sent it *or the man who received it* is a crook—take your choice!”

Before the captain of the *Colonia* could reply, S. W. James, or, as he demanded to be called, J. W. Shute, was gone.

Quick thinking was a portion of his business in life. In less than the distance from home to first base he had definitely outlined his plan of action. Of course he would give the head man of the ship no cause to resort to war measures; that would be silly—worse than kicking yourself out of a big game which you might help to win. No, sir-ee! He would stand for “James”—he would *be* S. W. James. Quietly, but none the less decisively, he would devote himself to an unemotional consideration of his highly exasperating plight. He would see if past devotion to the stories of the Great Detective had taught him anything worth while regarding inferences and deductions from a limited array of facts. For the next nine days, or until the ship touched at Gibraltar, he would do nothing else!

On land James Winton Shute would have kept steadfastly to his resolve. The lure of Chestnut Street at the shopping hour on a bright morning

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would not have deflected him from his charted course. But he was to find it different on ship-board. He was to discover something revolutionary about a sea voyage, something that jars one loose and cuts one off completely from ordinary life. The great white trail which fetches up at the stern of the ship leads away from everyday existence, lengthening the space back to the confines of duty and custom and habit as one nautical mile is tossed high on another.

For the first time in Win Shute's experience the pleasing shape of a girl bending to the wind, skirts taut like a sail close-hauled, tousled wavy brown hair brushing her animated face, Irish blue eyes bright and beaming, cheeks aglow with the delight of living, suddenly swept into his ken, and away went the restraints of an orderly, carefully planned scheme of life.

"Gee, what a swell girl!" he muttered. Then: "Why's she with that crook?"

It was Miss Riley, and she was attended by Jerrold Mansel, the wireless operator. More to the point, they were having a jolly time together.

Miss Riley and her mother, Mrs. Daniel Riley, occupied Suite A 9 and 15 on the upper promenade deck, listing at \$700 for the voyage to Naples. It was the finest suite on the ship.

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There was, however, nothing undemocratic about Miss Riley. Although she was the most fascinating person on the ship, she didn't let that bother her. Her mother was a subdued, almost timid, woman past middle age, who had a habit of fading into the furniture and becoming a stationary part of her surroundings. She was easily the best listener on the boat. Her daughter was devoted to her, and Mrs. Riley plainly showed that her interest was restricted to her "Girly," as she called her daughter.

Necessarily, first impressions prevail largely at sea. Unless a person is preceded aboard ship by a reputation with a wide circulation, he is known and estimated by what appears to his fellow voyagers. Nothing was known about Mrs. and Miss Riley. But they occupied the most costly rooms on the ship, and, although they dressed simply, it was that simplicity for which tailors and modistes charge the highest prices. "Wealthy people," was the ship's verdict.

Miss Riley's beauty, which, of course, endeared her to the masculine element, for some reason did not detract from her favour with the women. They liked her because she never failed to "notice" them. "She's nice to every one" was another general observation. Finally,

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and this was perhaps the real test, she was considerate of the servants. The deck steward hovered about Mrs. Riley continually, simply because Miss Riley was too active to require much of his service. The room steward so fortunate as to look after A 9 and 15 was in constant argument with the pantryman on account of his raids for delicacies. It was within reason to say of her: "Gee, she's a swell girl."

Win Shute was not one of those who worshipped from afar. Just as in baseball he was in the game every minute, so in this new game he played it assiduously. The day of his interview with the captain he had performed a slight favour for Mrs. Riley, the ubiquitous steward being off duty. This led to an introduction to "my daughter," and that resulted in the transformation of the voyage. From the first he got on swimmingly with Miss Riley. They seemed to "perform in the points," as he put it, "like a veteran battery."

"What's a battery?" asked Miss Riley.

Win Shute was amazed, but he cheerfully explained: "Pitcher and catcher. Aren't you a baseball fan?"

"I never saw a game in my life," she confessed.

"You've got something coming to you," said Win.

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"You can't get me excited about any game to watch. I'm devoted to tennis and golf, and I played hockey and basketball at school. But I *played*—I didn't merely look on. A baseball fan must be the laziest sort of human being: he runs away from his business, and then he hasn't the energy or the get-up to play. He sits idly by as other persons exert themselves. It's too vicarious for me."

"Too what?" asked Win, who was far from joyous over the turn of the discussion.

"Vicarious—letting a substitute play for you."

"I never let a substitute play for me if I can help it," boasted Win. Then he pulled himself up short and shifted the conversation to astronomy. He had flunked it at college.

It was a decided shock to him that Miss Riley didn't care for the national game.

If anything were needed to enhance Miss Riley's charm, it was the mystery that developed about or enveloped her the third day out. Win Shute heard of it from his room steward, who had picked it up from the waiter at the purser's table. The purser was the agent of publicity, and it was surmised that he had gleaned his intelligence from the captain. Anyhow, it was a matter that the captain and the purser would naturally talk over.

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Via wireless had come an inquiry to the captain of the *Colonia* about a passenger. The inquiry was from the United States Government—so much was known. It concerned a young woman who was travelling with her mother. She was described in the general terms of strikingly handsome and clever. From this the descriptions varied according to the whim or imagination of the person repeating the morsel of gossip. The nub of the tale was that the young woman was a fugitive from justice!

Nothing could have been invented by the wit of man so to whet the curiosity of a seagoing bunch of lively minded people as this—that among their number was a person passing as a lady who was in reality fleeing from the clutches of the law. Indeed, one might be talking to her this very minute!

Immediately a new ship's game was started—find the fugitive. The search was carried on by a process of elimination. First the sailing list was combed for a mother and daughter. It turned out, unfortunately, that in the first cabin there were exactly twenty-one pairs of mothers and daughters. As to whether these twenty-one mothered maidens were handsome and clever, opinions differed markedly. Some of the daughters were good-looking but undeniably dull;

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others were clever but plain. Not half a dozen could come within range of the specifications.

When the consensus of opinion was about to pounce upon Miss Riley, who headed the list of "suspects," another bit of information leaked out. The woman wanted was a *stenographer*. Here the search for the guilty one began all over. Miss Riley was wealthy—her ship accommodations and her dress denoted that—so it must be some one else. But after considering the qualifications of other possibilities for hours on end, Mistress Consensus again hovered about Miss Riley. Thus the first cabin divided itself into two camps—the partisans of Miss Riley and those of "the field." But paradoxically, in this instance, partisan meant enemy.

The ship got hectic about it, and because of it Win Shute got into trouble.

He was watching the poker game in the smoking-room—"playing vicariously," he expressed it—when the loose-jointed conversation switched to the unsolved mystery of the ship—the identity of the fugitive from justice. Eventually there was an argument over the demerits of Miss Riley.

Win Shute was angry at mention of her name. To him it was contemptible that it should be dragged in and bandied about over booze and

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poker chips. His reason prompted him to get out before he heard anything which he would be compelled to resent, but he decided that that would be deserting a lady in distress. So he remained and bottled up his rising wrath.

Two men—one an ordinarily decent chap who had taken a little too much, and the other a cynical, self-contained man, the best poker player at the table—brought the unmanly discussion to a precipitate conclusion. There had been many references to Miss Riley, most of them complimentary in nature, and the decent but tanked-up chap had proved her champion. As a clincher he asked:

“That girl has the finest rooms on the boat. Does that look like she is a stenographer?”

The cynical man answered:

“If she is the stenog of one of them Pittsburg millionaires, it’s the kind of a suite you’d expect to find her in. Get me?”

There was a coarse laugh, which changed in the middle into an expression of concern. What happened was swift.

Win Shute said something in the gambler’s ear and neatly slapped his face. The gambler, raging, jumped to his feet, scattering glasses and chips, which went clattering to the floor, and made a vicious pass at the interloper. With the

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celerity of dodging a wild pitch, Win Shute avoided the first, and, catching the gambler off his balance, floored him with a pretty uppercut. Then the gambler, blind with rage, seized a whisky bottle from the wreckage. But before he could use it his arms were pinioned from behind, and Shute was pushed out of the smoking-room.

As the loss in rum and glassware, generously estimated, was made good, and as the smoking-room steward was properly rewarded for his future reticence, the episode did not come officially before the captain. But unofficially, through the human wireless system, the story went all over the ship. In its travel it became embellished with the ship's doctor's account, based on personal observation, of James's arrival on the ship—dead drunk.

The story did not get to Miss Riley in expurgated form. An uncomplimentary remark had been made about her—"Oh, nothing of any consequence—bless your heart, no!"—and "James" had thought himself called upon to defend her with his fists. Idiotic boy! But then—"You know, my dear, he's a terrible drinker. Yes, indeed, he was brought aboard the night we sailed so drunk that two men had to carry him—two men; the doctor saw them!"

Win Shute, in his wholesome and innocent

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view of things, believed that the unfortunate affair in the smoking-room would be hushed up. Having liberally rewarded the steward for the trouble that had been caused him, and thinking that "those present" would treat the episode from the standpoint of the least said the quickest forgotten, Win went about in high spirits, as if nothing had happened—headed straight for Miss Riley.

They were getting on famously. Together they had won many of the events in the sports, and at ship's tennis, which required agility and a sure, quick grip on the elusive ropen rings, they were in the finals to be played that morning. Miss Riley couldn't have avoided seeing him had she been so minded. They won, and were proclaimed champions of the sea—at least of that part of it dominated by the steamship *Colonia*.

It had been a hard-fought match, in which physical condition played not a small part. Miss Riley rather amused Win as they were resting in steamer chairs on the boat deck by saying:

"You seem to be pretty fit."

"Fit?" His tone had in it a shade of sarcasm. "I'm always fit—always ready to jump in and play—anything."

"Always?" She looked at him quizzically.

He was blind as a bat. "You bet—in season and out of season."

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"You must have a splendid constitution."

"I have—but I don't abuse it. I want to *last*." This had a queer meaning, he saw too late, but he didn't try to explain.

To his surprise she said, quite impulsively: "I do believe that's sure." And for emphasis she rested her hand for a moment on his sleeve. Her touch gave him an odd thrill. It was as good as delivering a hit with a man on second, which struck him queer! Not once did he consider the reputation as a hard drinker borne by "S. W. James."

Miss Riley got up to go to her state-room, and then, as if under the spell of impulsiveness, added quite shyly:

"It was good of you to take my part in the smoking-room."

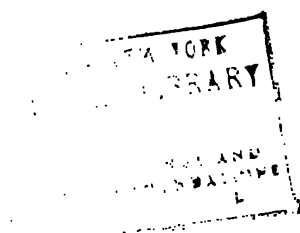
"You didn't hear?" asked Shute, his face horror-stricken.

"Oh, I didn't hear verbatim what was said about me," she explained, her tone a little hard. "But I can imagine. Men are such brutes—most men. And I wanted you to know that I—I liked what you did, no matter what others say about it. I must go now."

She slipped away, leaving Win happy and angry, turnabout: happy at her unexpected tender of gratitude, angry at the man who had blabbed.



“I do believe that’s true.” For emphasis she rested her hand for a moment on his sleeve. Her touch gave him an odd thrill



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But happiness soon took the ascendancy. In his limited experience he hadn't much to compare it with, except breaking into the majors the very summer he graduated from college. This, on second thought, seemed a most unhappy comparison, as Miss Riley didn't care for baseball.

Then she could never care for a professional ball player! He hadn't thought of it before, but now, for some imperative reason that he didn't try to analyze, the idea forced itself upon him. If she couldn't care, what then?

"Weland at Gibraltar to-morrow." Win Shute heard a passing remark, and suddenly it dawned on him that the day he once had looked forward to most keenly, but which he had almost forgotten, was at hand. At last he could move against his enemies! Now he could establish his identity!

But something held him back. Miss Riley wasn't fond of baseball! She had come to like "Mr. James," but would she, a "real swell," ever look with favour upon Win Shute, professional ball player? He shook his head gloomily.

Looking upon the much-advertised rock next day, he wasn't at all impatient to leave the ship.

"Going ashore?" inquired a voice at his side. It was Jed Mansel, the wireless operator.

"S'pose so," answered Shute without show of enthusiasm.

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"Better not if you don't want to get skinned," warned Mansel. "Those brigands could skin a Bowery pawnbroker."

"Want to stretch my legs," returned Shute.

"Why not join me? I know the spot and the ways of the native holdup artists. I'll act as guide if you say so—glad to."

Never before had Jerrold Mansel offered to do him a favour. Their only contact after the first day's consultation over the wireless messages had come in rivalry over Miss Riley's time. Now the hero of the *Regent* was brimful of friendliness. Win Shute's suspicions, already sufficiently aroused regarding Mansel, were considerably augmented by this urgent invitation. But he smiled as he might have done in facing a pitcher who had something "on" him.

"Thank you—I've no time for sight-seeing. I have some business to attend to here."

Win Shute was off the ship among the very first—before the wireless operator; he saw to that. He hired a conveyance and ordered the driver to make tracks for the cable office.

"If you get there before anybody from the ship I'll give you double fare!" promised Shute—and he had to.

He wrote out a long message to Tris Ford, explaining in detail what had happened to him and

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how he had done his best to communicate by wireless, and he stood over the operator while he sent it. Then he asked how long it would take to get an answer.

"From two to six hours," was the reply.

"I'll wait," announced Shute.

"But don't you want to see the fortifications?" asked the operator. "You will have ample time."

"I want to see nothing except the reply to that message," replied Shute, sitting down and making himself comfortable for a long wait. "On second guess, I do want to see something else," he added. "Have you any newspapers—newspapers printed in English?"

The operator pointed to a file of the Paris edition of the *New York Dispatch*. Shute grabbed it and began to run his eye over the last paper of the file. There was nothing on the first page—nothing but foreign stuff. Buried away on an inside page was a brief cable dispatch headed:

BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

"The Philadelphia Nationals won"—Win Shute's heart sank—"the so-called world's baseball championship to-day, defeating the American League champions 1 to 0, and taking the series, four games to three. The contest between the two professional leagues is restricted to America, and the high-sounding

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phrase, 'world's championship,' is nothing but an advertising dodge to increase the attendance. However, the trick worked, for it is estimated that 235,000 people paid to see the games. At present America is baseball crazy. But your correspondent believes that it is a phase of American life that will pass."

Win Shute threw down the paper in deep disgust. "And over here they call that an American newspaper! I see I'm going to like this Europe," he concluded.

After six hours of waiting, the operator handed him a cable dispatch. It read:

Ford out of town. Report to American Consul, Naples. Do you need money?

It was signed by the club's secretary.

He cabled in answer to address him care of the consul at Naples. He did not ask for money. And he went back to the ship in no hilarious frame of mind. His team had lost the world's championship—the plot against him had been thoroughly successful! And he was no nearer spotting his enemies than he was before going ashore. And Miss Riley didn't care for baseball! This seemed to cap the climax. Strange how values change in a voyage across the Atlantic.

Aboard ship he ran upon the ship's doctor and

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the wireless operator in close confab. Win Shute was not curious until he caught the doctor's words:

"The Giant-killers lost. I see by the *Dispatch*, and you won. I'll pay you when we get paid off."

"My tip was pretty good," admitted Jed Mansel. "I made quite a killing. Cleaned up two thousand dollars."

"Two thousand?" repeated the doctor. "You *were* lucky."

"Not lucky—wise," corrected Mansel, winking slyly. "I knew that one of the Giant-killers' best men couldn't play."

Win Shute was certain! The wireless operator *was* a crook. He was a party to the devilish conspiracy that had drugged and put him away on the ship!

Rage such as he had never felt in all his life consumed him. He could not curb his desire to hurl himself upon Mansel and beat him to insensibility. But as he was on his toes to spring, a restraining hand was laid upon his arm.

It was Miss Riley. "May I speak to you, please?"

Reluctantly Win Shute turned from his enemy. He and Miss Riley walked along the deck until they were out of hearing of everybody.

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"I looked for you before the passengers went ashore," she said.

"Guess I was the first one to land," Win explained.

"You see," she went on, then faltered—"you see—I wanted to ask a favour of you." She stopped.

The ship's mystery unaccountably flashed across Win's mind! But he didn't pause a second in replying:

"Sure! Ask something hard. Wish I could do a real big favour for you."

"You can. I have a queer feeling that something is going to happen. It's perfectly silly, of course, but—but if something should, will you look after mother? She is so devoted to me and so dependent on me that I don't know what she ——" Again she faltered.

"I sure will—and look after you, too," answered Win.

"That's so good of you. But don't trouble about me. It's mother I'm worried about." Then with a look of unconcealed admiration she concluded:

"But I feel better now. It seemed to me that you were the only one on the ship that I could go to—the only one I wanted to trust mother to."

Notwithstanding the bitter disappointment of

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the day, Win Shute went into dinner that night with a heart as buoyant as a toy balloon. He was planning a walk and a talk by southern moonlight with Miss Riley.

But all evening she paced the deck in earnest conversation with Jerrold Mansel.

Win Shute was unable to explain it. Did he suspect Miss Riley? Not for a fleeting second would he admit it to himself! He dropped off to peaceful slumber that night satisfied beyond cavil that she was the finest girl in the world—new or old.

A less healthy-minded person than James Winton Shute, a less trustful nature, would have worked himself into a state of both irritation and doubt over Miss Riley's growing intimacy with the wireless operator. Every day she walked with Jerrold Mansel, and there was a conspicuous attentiveness on his part, coupled with an authoritative way of commanding her comfort, that indicated to a close observer how well the hero of the *Regent* believed he stood with the most attractive woman on the ship. Evidently he looked upon himself as Miss Riley's preferred companion, if not as a suitor whose advances were far from distasteful.

Win Shute figured out to his own satisfaction why things were thus. He knew that Miss Ri-

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ley was receiving wireless messages—he had seen Mansel hand her more than one—and Shute decided that the operator was taking this means to keep in touch with her. Whereas a steward would carry Marconigrams to other passengers, Jed Mansel invariably delivered Miss Riley's messages himself. Naturally this attention would be recognized by an appreciative person like Miss Riley.

Further, Win Shute made generous allowance for Jerrold Mansel's advantages in the game of "fooling the ladies." He was good-looking—rather the dashing officer type so much admired by young women at sea. Added to this, he was a real hero. His heroism was unquestioned, and he was in the habit of making the most of it. Therefore, Win Shute thought that Miss Riley was entitled to indulge her womanlike partiality for heroes, in common with every other female passenger. But it did make him jealous.

That Jerrold Mansel was downright crooked, there wasn't much doubt. But Win had to admit that his proof was far from conclusive. Tris Ford's wireless was a fake—but there was the possibility of faking somewhere along the line of transmission. Mansel had bet heavily against the Giant-killers—but so had thousands of other persons. The operator's remark about the player

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who would be missed from the line-up was strong circumstantial evidence against him—and still it could have been a “second guess”; he might have heard after the series that one of the best men had been out of the game. Certainly there wasn’t enough solid proof to warrant Win Shute in denouncing the wireless operator.

And if he did—if he warned Miss Riley against Jerrold Mansel—it would involve a disclosure of the fact that he, James Winton Shute, was a professional baseball player. He wasn’t ready to make that admission. The fact that the finest girl didn’t care a hang for the national pastime constituted a mighty serious problem. It wasn’t pleasant to continue to masquerade as “Mr. James,” but it was an incognito enforced. So things were permitted to drift. Drifting seemed to accord with the dreamy atmosphere of the Mediterranean.

Win Shute insisted that Lake Erie, as he had seen it on the boat from Detroit to Cleveland, was “exactly as blue.”

“Steel blue—cold,” argued Miss Riley, “but no turquoise tints. If Lake Erie separated Florida from Georgia, instead of Ohio from Ontario, then you might get a bit of the same colouring. But as it is, nothing like it—so I’m told—except the Ionian Sea from Taormina.”

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"Where's that?" asked Win irreverently.

"The most beautiful place in Sicily."

"Sicily? Not for mine," said Win. "They tried out a Sicilian once on the Pirates——"

He saw Miss Riley's look of perplexity, and remembered that she wasn't a fan.

"I was talking baseball," Win confessed.

"Here—facing the storied land of the Alhambra?" she mocked. "You foolish youngster. You'll be talking of baseball in the gardens of the Villa Borghese."

"Rome?"

"Yes—Rome."

"I've got you!" exclaimed Win excitedly. "The Chicagos and the All-Americans played there—in the Villa Borghese—in eighty-nine!"

"Baseball?" Miss Riley couldn't believe it.

"Our national game," emphasized Win, "and say—the King of Italy stayed till the last man was out in the ninth!"

It was moonlight on the Mediterranean, the last night but one of Win Shute's long voyage to Naples from unconsciousness. He had started out to act the part of a "trusty"—to do nothing against the captain's authority, but secretly to work toward one end, namely, the circumvention of his enemies. After a fortnight at sea, al-

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though he was naturally interested in his own case, he had lost much of his violent anger against those who had forced him to become a passenger on the ship. For if they hadn't—if he had remained at home—he would not have met the finest girl! As Tris Ford would have said: "There ain't nothing to that."

It was early, scarcely dark, but with a full moon, and together they were on the lookout for the first sight of Genoa. They had arrived at that important stage in their acquaintance when the original discovery was to be made of front names.

"You've never told me your name," he urged.

"Mother always calls me 'Girlie,'" she responded, half in fun.

"I know—but I never was strong for pet names—in public, I mean. Tell me your real name."

She was plainly embarrassed. It was a perfectly justifiable question, and there was no reason, which he could see, why she should hesitate. Yet she did.

"I'm not going to use it—till you want me to."

"Oh, it's not that—not that at all. I'd be glad to have you call me—Imogen. It's Imogen."

"Imogen Riley," repeated Win. "Say, that's some name. If I'd named you myself, I'd have called you—Imogen."

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"Mother will be glad." And she laughed.

"Now, what's *your* name?" she asked.

It was his turn to be "fussed" and to hesitate. "My middle name's Winton—most everybody calls me Win."

"I suppose because you always *do*."

"Till now I have."

She edged away a trifle.

"Winton James is an excellent name," she declared. "I don't believe I would have it anything else."

He kicked the rail with his toe. It was an impatient kick. Masquerader!

"Look!"

She pointed to the lights, myriads of lights, bobbing on the shipping in the harbour and stretching high up to the summits of Monte Peraldo, where they lost their identity in the winking stars.

"Genoa!" he exclaimed.

"—the Superb," she completed.

"But to-morrow we go to Naples, and then ——" Win regarded Imogen wistfully.

"Don't let's speak of to-morrow," she hastened to say.

"No," he agreed. "We have to-night—all to ourselves."

"Yes," she whispered.

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But they didn't.

As the *Colonia* was warped in to the dock, olive-skinned officers, most of them with black moustachios, swarmed about the head of the pier. In their dress and cocky bearing they closely resembled soldiery. And they formed a guard about each gangway before any one was permitted to land.

Other officers came aboard immediately, and the word soon flew around the decks, started by some prattling petty officer of the ship, that the "boarders" were connected with the secret service of Italy. This resurrected the ship's mystery, and tongues began to wag and heads turn in excitement over the imminent disclosure of the fugitive's identity. At length was circulated the information that the officers were seeking a young woman who was wanted by both the Italian and the United States governments. Finally came the name—a Miss Leonard.

Hearing it, Imogen trembled and clutched Win Shute by the arm.

"What's the matter?" he asked, staring into her terrified face. "It's—it's Leonard."

"My name's Leonard—Imogen Leonard. Forgive me!"

PART III—PULLING OFF THE PLAY

WIN SHUTE had been jolted at Genoa. Another but more agreeable surprise awaited him at Naples. After the *Colonia*, having cut a white lane across the cobalt Bay of Naples, was maneuvering to dock, he saw on the wharf, scanning every face looking down from the big black ship—Tris Ford.

Ashore it's customary for an accommodation train to be sidetracked for an express—for one person to leave after a friend and beat him to their common destination. But when in sea travel no other ship overtakes and passes you, it is curious, almost preternatural, to have a friend you had left at home greet you on your steamer's arrival in a foreign port. This experience was all the more inexplicable to Win Shute because of scheduled intervening events. He knew, from the cable dispatch in the un-American newspaper which he had read at Gibraltar, that the World Series went to seven games before the Giant-killers were beaten. With Sunday interrupting, this involved eight days

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—eight days after his boat had sailed from New York. The cablegram from the club secretary informed him of the manager's absence from the city, but the idea that Tris Ford was on his way to Europe hadn't suggested itself to the "shanghaied" ball player.

As Win Shute learned afterward, the manager of the Giant-killers had kept his objective a secret from every living soul save his wife. Even the club officials supposed, for several days, that the manager had slipped quietly out of the city to rest after the hardest fought diamond battle in the records of the national game. The secretary had been told to reply to any cablegram from Win Shute in one way: to say that Tris Ford was out of town, and to urge the second baseman to remain on board until the ship called at Naples, where he would be met by the American consul. The big series ended on Tuesday, and at 1 A. M. next morning Tris Ford, under the *nom de mer* of Anson Jones, had sailed on the *Lauretania*. The following Monday morning he landed at Fishguard, boarded the special train for Dover, crossed the cantankerous Channel, and arrived in Paris in the afternoon. Ford left the Gare de Lyon at ten o'clock that night, and after a night, a day, and a second night on the train de luxe arrived in Rome early

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Tuesday morning. The *Colonia* wasn't due at Naples until the next day. He was at the palace leased by the Hon. John Bismar, American Ambassador to Italy, before that Chicago millionaire had finished his uncontinental breakfast of fruit, oatmeal, ham and eggs, and coffee, eaten to the accompanying perusal of the *Continental Daily Mail*.

The Ambassador was expecting *Tristram Carlingford*. John Bismar's boss, the President of the United States, was a thirty-third-degree fan; also, the White House staff were fans down to the clerk who addressed the social invitations; and when the assistance of Washington had been solicited in the hunt for the king of second basemen and the pursuit of his kidnappers, all other Government business, foreign and domestic, was shunted into second place. President Bancroft of the American League afterward observed that not for naught had he been distributing annual passes in Morocco leather cases to the executive branch of the Government.

So if Ambassador Bismar succeeded in rendering valuable service in the search and capture, he would be certain of more official favour even than when he secured the contracts for two Chinese battleships for Yankee shipbuilders—his one real diplomatic triumph. Which explains why

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he was more than cordial in his greeting of the manager of the Giant-killers.

As in all of the pourparlers of diplomacy, the interview between John Bismer and Tris Ford was some time arriving at the main point. Ford had to play over the World Series for the Ambassador's benefit before he could get down to the business at hand.

"What a heartbreaking finish!" exclaimed the Ambassador—"deciding game—score 1 to 0 against you—men on second and third—nobody out—and you mean to tell me you couldn't squeeze a run across the plate?"

Tris Ford was literal-minded when talking baseball. He took it that the Ambassador used *squeeze* in the technical sense—that he meant to ask why the "squeeze play" hadn't been attempted.

"You'd naturally think we'd 'a' tried the squeeze, now wouldn't you?" said Ford. "It was a great chance for it—for our double squeeze, in fact."

"You got me," confessed the Ambassador "What on earth's the 'double squeeze'? Must have come in since I put on velvet pants."

John Bismer laughed at his own joke on the diplomatic service, as did Tris Ford.

"It's this way," explained Ford. "You have

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a man on second and a man on third, and nobody out, we'll say."

"Just the situation in the seventh game of the World Series," emphasized the Ambassador.

Tris Ford nodded and went on: "You also have a man at bat who is a natural bunter. Well, the batter signals to the base runner on third—hitches up his trousers, or some such ordinary signal as that. Then when the pitcher begins to wind up, the man on third breaks for the plate—comes sailing into what looks like a sure put-out. But the batsman reaches out and taps the ball—if you pull off the play—and the man scores! You see—a ball knocked to pitcher, or halfway even, will be enough to 'squeeze' the man across the plate, because he's got such a long start."

"I see!" exclaimed the Ambassador, his eyes shining like the orbs of an American boy. "But what about the double squeeze?"

"I'm just coming to that," said Ford, smiling. "Taking the same play—when the man on third starts for home, the runner on second legs it to third. But he doesn't stop—keeps right on running, and—well, somehow or other the pitcher—or it might be the catcher, if it was a short bunt—seeing that the first man is bound to score and fearing he won't get any put-out,

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throws the ball to first to head off the batter. And—the second man scores!”

“Couldn’t the pitcher get the second man at the plate?” asked the Ambassador excitedly.

“Sure he could,” grinned Ford; “why—the second base runner isn’t more than halfway home when the pitcher fields the ball.”

“Then why in Sam Hill doesn’t the galoot throw to the plate?”

“You tell me,” said Ford. “That’s the queer part of it. Of course the crowd is yelling like maniacs; the man scoring first is upsetting, and the desire to get at least one man on the play, overwhelming—all that, I suppose. Anyhow, we tried the play seven times last season and got away with it all but once. That time the batter failed to connect with the ball, and the first man was an easy out.”

“Now you’ve explained it so a woman or a foreigner could understand, tell me why you didn’t try at the crisis of the world’s championship.”

“Because the man at bat couldn’t bunt—and we didn’t have a sure bunter to substitute. The man who would have batted had he been in the game is the best in the country at pulling the squeeze,” added Tris Ford sadly.

“You don’t mean——”

“Win Shute—yes, I do,” finished Ford.

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"And if he'd been in the game, you'd have won it?"

"Nine chances out of ten we would."

"So losing Shute lost you the World Series?"

"Lost us the world's championship—there ain't nothing to that."

"The skunks!" exclaimed the Ambassador. "Those kidnappers ought to be strung up!"

"Ought to be," agreed Ford. "But, as far as I'm concerned, all I want is to put the chief crook in stripes—Jake Stinger, the New York gambler."

"You've got some of the gang, I understand from Washington."

"Yes—the Secret Service men got hold of a fellow who squealed."

"How'd they work the dirty trick?"

"They faked up a newspaper syndicate—'Transcontinental'—headquarters New York, engraved stationery," recounted Tris Ford, "and offered Shute big money to report the World Series. Naturally he accepted, so they sent a man to Phillie to arrange details. He was supposed to arrive the day before the series opened, but was actually there a week earlier—at our best hotel, spending money, paying his checks with cash, and scattering coin in tips until he was solid with all the hotel people. Called himself 'Walter Noble'—nerve of it!"

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"Who gave him away?" interjected the Ambassador.

"Why—they had to have a double for their victim—some one to masquerade as Shute. That's where they fell down—picked the wrong man. The 'dummy' couldn't stand prosperity. After he left the hotel with his pockets full of money he started in to make a night of it—kept the taxi and blew in most of his money, then got in a row with the taxi driver over the fare. 'Twasn't so hard to trace him after that. He 'gave up' to the Secret Service men."

"How'd they manage with Shute?"

"Something like this," explained Ford: "The dummy came to see Noble in the afternoon, and the two of them kept ordering drinks right along—probably throwing most of the stuff away. When Shute called on Noble in the evening he was shown into the parlour of Noble's suite—the dummy was in the bedroom keeping dead quiet. Well, the crook—that's Noble—gave Shute a knockout in ginger ale—Win Shute never took a drink in his life; but they tell me ginger ale disguises that knockout powder better'n any beverage. Moment he began to pass away and lose consciousness, the dummy put on Shute's hat and overcoat, went downstairs, and was sent away by the doorman in the taxi or—

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dered 'for Mr. Shute.' Just before Shute became helpless—when he was able to stagger, but too dazed to know anything—the porter was called. Noble told him that his friend—Shute now passed for the dummy—must be helped down and put into his automobile, as Noble was leaving town. Thinking it was the case of a 'drunk,' the porter—probably well fed—willingly helped Noble to carry his victim down and put him in the machine.

"There was a doctor in the touring car—we got him, too; he's a sure-enough crook," continued Ford. "The doctor watched Shute every second of the ride to New York, keeping his hypodermic handy. But the lad didn't rouse before they got him to the *Colonia's* pier. Then they woke him up a little by slapping his face, so they could carry him aboard as if he was drunk—lots of young bloods are carried aboard steamers that way, I understand. They spilled liquor on his clothes and face, then called the ship's doctor—you know the ability of the average ship's doctor! Told him that Shute—who was booked as S. W. Jones—had been celebrating before sailing! The doctor looked him over and said: 'He's all seas over, all right.'"

"But weren't they afraid he might come to before the ship sailed?"

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"They took care of that. After the ship's doctor had gone, the doctor crook gave him a hypodermic—enough morphine to keep him asleep till noon the next day, when the ship would be away out to sea. A liberal tip to the room steward, who didn't suspect anything wrong, and the greatest second baseman in baseball was shanghaied!"

"All for the purpose of making a killing?" asked the Ambassador.

"The biggest killing the gamblers have made in years," said Ford. "Jake Stinger and his crowd are supposed to have cleaned up several hundred thousand dollars."

"But you've got him now—Jake Stinger!"

"That's the trouble—we haven't," admitted Ford. "Not one of the crooks caught so far will admit Stinger had anything to do with it. They're being paid big money, no doubt, to protect him."

"Then how do you know that he's mixed up in it?"

"We know that the fellow calling himself Walter Noble has done dirty work for Stinger before. He would probably go to the penitentiary for Stinger—for money."

"Then you're up against it?"

"Yes—unless we're right in the way we size

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up the case. You see," continued Ford, "the crooks had to do more than put Shute aboard that ship and keep him unconscious until she was out at sea. When he came to and realized where he was he'd naturally send a wireless to me. If it went through, why—I'd try to rescue him. Say—I'd have gotten from the Navy Yard a torpedo-boat destroyer and overtaken him! The crooks guessed that. So what would they naturally do?"

"Try to buy the wireless operator!" answered the wily diplomat.

"They did better'n that, we figure. They made sure of their man and then put him on the boat—got him installed as the Marconi operator for the voyage."

"You don't tell me! Who'd they get?"

"You'd never guess. He's popularly regarded as a hero—the hero of the *Regent*."

"Wireless operator who saved the steamship *Regent*?" The Ambassador was astonished.

Tris Ford nodded. "Jerrold Mansel."

"British subject, isn't he?"

"Believe he is. Does that complicate matters?"

"Somewhat. But we'll try to manage it," the Ambassador assured Tris Ford.

"If you don't mind I'll give you our position in regard to Jerrold Mansel."

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"Certainly—go ahead," said the Ambassador.

"We have no desire to prosecute Mansel—*provided* we can get from him proof which will convict the 'man higher up.' We aren't bothering with the *tools*.

"Anyhow, that man Mansel saved many lives—protected women and children—when the *Regent* was sinking. That deed shouldn't be forgotten—and we ain't going to forget it. We look upon Mansel as the victim of other men's greed. First, a greedy theatrical manager tempted him to commercialize his heroism—then cast him adrift when he was no longer a box-office attraction. Mansel was broke, got to drinking, and had no job. He was just ripe for Jake Stinger to pluck."

The Ambassador nodded vigorously. "So if Mansel will confess—and name the man higher up——"

"We're satisfied," finished Ford. "We're after Jake Stinger. And it ain't just for revenge. The only menace to the integrity of baseball is gambling—and I want to hit the gamblers a crack that they won't forget. Say—putting Jake Stinger in stripes means as much to me as putting a trust magnate in jail means to the President! Understand, he's got his heart set on it."

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The Ambassador smiled—but gave no sign. After a diplomatic pause he continued the conversation: “We ought to be able to bring Jerrold Mansel to time, somehow. He could be detained on the landing of the *Colonia* to-morrow and paroled in the custody of the British Ambassador. Then it could all be fixed up diplomatically—quietly. I’ll see Sir George Claughton at once.”

Tris Ford looked puzzled.

“The British Ambassador to Italy,” explained John Bismar. “Great cricketer in his day—he’ll take a keen interest in this case.”

“Tell him if he’ll help us out with Mansel I’ll acknowledge that American baseball came from English cricket!”

“You’re a born diplomat,” was the Ambassador’s compliment.

“That’s strange—for I happen to be an Irishman.”

Tris Ford thought it a good joke.

If Win Shute marvelled at sight of Tris Ford waiting on the quay at Naples, the manager of the Giant-killers returned the compliment and opened his mouth in astonishment. For James Winton Shute, quite evidently in the best of health, did not disembark alone!

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On his arm, glancing up at him in perfect trust, was a timid, sweet-faced woman of middle age, whose wistful eyes confessed that she had been weeping. She was treated with a kind of gallant deference enjoyed only by the mother of a particularly attractive daughter.

Win Shute bowled Tris Ford over with his effusiveness. "How are you, old boy? Tickled pink to see you! Le'me introduce you to Mrs. Leonard—Mrs. Leonard, Mr. Carlingford—isn't this sky some blue!"—all before Tris Ford could get in a word. Incidentally, Win Shute had never said "Carlingford" on any other occasion. Pulling the manager aside, while Mrs. Leonard obediently examined the sky once again, Win whispered: "My name's James—S. W. James—remember! Explain later."

Getting the sign, Tris Ford nodded.

"When's the next train to Rome?" asked Win, smiling significantly upon Mrs. Leonard.

"I don't know exactly," answered Ford.

"Must start at once," announced Win.

"W-h-a-t for?" Tris Ford could not suppress his curiosity entirely.

"To see the American Ambassador."

The manager's face brightened. "He's here—on the dock—waiting for——"

Win scowled.

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"—for an American he has to meet," completed Ford.

"After he sees his friend—whoever he is—have the Ambassador look us up at the Excelsior—that's the top-notch hotel, isn't it?"

"Mebbe it is," acknowledged Ford. "I'm stopping there."

"On our way," ordered Win, rather arbitrarily. But he winked at Tris Ford.

"I'll join you there in—half an hour," said the manager, "after I've arranged with the Ambassador. Say—John Bismarck's all right. Why—he's a real fan."

But Win Shute was hurrying away—out of range of the human ear. With Mrs. Leonard he rattled off in a one-horse victoria fortified by a taxi-fare register. That's why he didn't see the wireless operator of the *Colonia* taken from the ship and paroled in the custody of the British Ambassador.

At the time agreed Tris Ford knocked at the door of S. W. James—for so James Winton Shute was registered at the hotel in Naples. "Shall we talk here?" Ford asked, "or go to my room?"

"Here—Mrs. Leonard is across the hall."

"Say—who's this Mrs. Leonard and what's the game?" demanded Tris Ford. "You didn't

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wise up to it, but the American Ambassador was down on that dock looking for *you*."

"Honest? Are you next to the Ambassador?" Win Shute asked eagerly.

"Sure I am. The President of the United States has 'released' him to me!" There was a matchless smile.

"Fine business! Now you can help me get Miss Leonard out of trouble."

"Miss Leonard?—daughter——"

"Only daughter—only girl!" Win's eyes gleamed. Then, catching the look of understanding on Tris Ford's face, half humorous, half glad, he blushed—blushed as a bush leaguer sometimes does when returning to the bench after his first safe hit.

"You haven't been signed, have you?" asked the manager.

"Not yet," confessed Win, suppressing the inevitable sigh. "But I'd sign in a minute if she'd offer me a contract—contract with a reserve clause for life," he announced boldly.

Then he told all about it, ending with the why and the wherefore of his incognito of "S. W. James."

"She'll never care for me a second when she knows I'm a professional ballplayer. *She's* a dead swell." Win exuded gloom with every syllable.

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"If she won't have you," said Tris Ford, "you wouldn't have her." This was not an Irishism.

"Tris—the unclad lad with the bow and arrow has winged me—might as well confess it."

"You don't have to tell me that," laughed Ford.

"Why not?" Win was startled. Had the world begun to guess?

"Because you haven't so much as referred to your own case—how you got aboard that ship, and how you were treated."

"Oh, I cabled that from Gibraltar. I'm all right—so what's the use bothering over it now?"

"Well, I'm——" Tris Ford didn't finish. His expression was enough.

"I know—you think I ought to be fighting mad at the crooks that put me aboard that boat drugged," said Win. "One way I am—another I'm not. If I hadn't been sent off on the *Colonia* I shouldn't have met Imogen Leonard."

Tris Ford wagged his head from side to side, looking the while like a fair reproduction of Resignation. He asked the king of second basemen if he had any objection to further activities on the manager's part to land the chief crook in prison. Win Shute had none, provided he was not dragged into it until he had made his "play for the girl." But when Tris Ford sought in-

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formation about Jerrold Mansel, there was a protest.

“See here, Tris,” argued Win, “what Mansel did to me—suppressing my messages and faking a wireless from you to the captain—was rotten bad, I know. But let me tell you something: at the same time he was protecting Miss Leonard!”

“How?”

“The captain of the *Colonia* was getting messages asking him if a person answering her description was aboard the boat—she travelled under the name of Riley, remember I told you. Same time *she* was getting messages from some friend ashore warning her. As I understand it, her wirelesses were in code—but she didn’t have the right code with her; so couldn’t read ’em, and had to ask for translations in plain English. Of course then the wireless operator spotted her. But Jerrold Mansel didn’t give her away to a soul on the ship—not even to the captain!

“What’s more—he didn’t take advantage of his inside information; he didn’t try to—to work on her sympathies because he was shielding her. There’s some good in that chap yet.”

Tris Ford gave assurances of fair dealing in regard to the wireless operator—for Miss Leonard’s sake! Abruptly he asked about the young lady: where she was. He was told that Imogen

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Leonard was detained in the best hotel at Genoa, which was surrounded by guards, and that Win Shute wouldn't have left her there alone if she hadn't insisted that he take her mother to Rome to see the American Ambassador. This mission had made it possible for Win to obey the cablegram directing him not to leave the ship until arrival at Naples.

"Why is Miss Leonard detained?" Tris Ford asked pointedly.

"Her mother knows—I don't," answered Win.

"You don't know?"

"Of course not! You don't suppose I tried to pry into her secrets." Win Shute's manner said further: "How very preposterous!" But Tris Ford wasn't taken in. He looked Win straight in the eye, smiled in a way to take the sting off what he intended to say, then let fly: "You batted .337 this last season, didn't you?"

"B'lieve I did—but what are you driving at?" The manager paid no attention to the question, simply went ahead:

"That means (barring base on balls) you made a safe hit every third time you faced the pitcher—a remarkable record. But two times out of three you failed to deliver the punch. Perhaps you went out on a pop fly, perhaps you struck out. I remember one game where a bush-league

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pitcher didn't allow you a safety and fanned you twice."

"What *are* you driving at, Tris?"

"Merely this: the best of us get fooled once in a while."

"And you think I'm fooled on Miss Leonard?" asked Win, frowning. "I'm not fooled—not for one minute."

"Not necessarily," was Ford's diplomatic rejoinder. "But you might be fooled and still keep out of the bonehead class. They tell me history's full o' brainy men who get fooled by women. And the better looking and the cleverer they are the easier a man's fooled. I assume Miss Leonard's—eh—good to look at?"

"Well—rather!"

"And not exactly dull?" drawled Tris.

"Clever enough to dope out new plays for the Giant-killers! And she doesn't care for baseball," Win Shute sadly remarked, failing completely to note the incongruity of his characterizations.

Tris Ford didn't. He laughed gleefully. Then announced that he must keep his return engagement with the Ambassador. As he was leaving the room Win called after him:

"Want to talk over the World Series with you when you have time."

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"When *I* have time? Say—you've got it bad, ain't you?" The manager of the Giant-killers walked down the hall chuckling.

The Ambassador of the United States of America accredited to Italy welcomed Tris Ford with a broad, see-what-a-big-boy-am-I grin. Ford could guess—'twas the symbol of accomplishment.

"Job's done!" exclaimed John Bismar. "Jerrold Mansel has confessed and incriminated that scoundrel Stinger! Seems it took a lot of work and pull to get Mansel reinstated as an operator and assigned to the *Colonia*. The wireless company had kept tabs on him—knew he was drinking and slipping down grade—and they weren't keen to have him back at the key. Jake Stinger had to give that part of the plot his personal attention. He dealt directly with Mansel. So you'll get your man higher up all right."

"Will Mansel testify against Jake Stinger?" asked Ford joyously.

"No doubt of it—that is, if you promise him immunity."

"We'll do more than that," said Ford. "I've been thinking of what Mansel did—saving the *Regent's* passengers—and can tell him that after

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he's helped us out by testifying he can come to me and I'll see that he gets a fresh start."

"I call that mighty liberal of you," said the Ambassador.

Tris Ford shook his head. "No—Mansel will be doing a great thing for baseball—helping to soak the gamblers—so he deserves consideration. Besides, there must be plenty of good in a real hero like him."

"Ought to be, and bet there is." The Ambassador pulled out his watch, caught the time, and got quickly to his feet. "If you'll excuse me," he said, "I'll complete this job with the British Ambassador so's we both can get back to Rome. Won't I see you there?"

"Sure," answered Tris Ford, "we play a game of ball there before long—our club and the new world's champions."

"Of course! I hadn't forgotten that big event. Keep this under your shirt—I've promised the President to get the King to see the game!"

"Fine!"

The Ambassador gripped Tris Ford by the hand preparatory to going.

"One minute, please," begged Ford.

John Bismar bobbed his head.

"Funny thing—but Mr. Shute has got it awful bad—got stuck on a girl! Why"—Tris Ford

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leaned toward the Ambassador—"she's made him forget all about being kidnapped—forget all about baseball!" This was the climax.

Forget baseball! The Ambassador couldn't believe it.

"Yes, sir. Why—he hasn't asked me a thing about the World Series yet, and I haven't had a chance to tell him about the round-the-world trip of our club and the world's champions."

"You don't tell me! He *has* got it bad. Hope she's the right girl."

"Shute swears she is—all right in every department. She's what I want to talk to you about, if you'll give me a minute more."

The Ambassador was obviously surprised.

"You can help," Tris Ford added quickly. "You see, she's an American girl, and she's in trouble—in trouble over here."

"Over here? Where?" For the first time the Ambassador spoke sharply.

"Genoa."

"She's not Imogen Leonard?"

"That's her name—Imogen Leonard. And Win Shute says she's a mighty fine girl."

"I'll be damned!" exploded his Excellency John Bismarck. Then after a period devoted to deep thought: "Does the White House know

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anything of this—know your man Shute's interested in this particular young woman?"

"Not as I know," answered Ford. "Didn't know it myself till less'un an hour ago. But I say—why did you ask?"

It was the born diplomat, Tristram Carlingford, who put the question.

It was the Ambassador ex officio who parried:

"Because Washington knows that Imogen Leonard is under surveillance by the Italian Government. It is an international matter. And for the present, I regret to say, I can do nothing for you. I bid you good morning, Mr. Ford."

The Ambassador bowed—rather stiffly, the manager of the Giant-killers afterward thought—and hurried off. His gait at least was not according to the canons of diplomatic usage.

Literally and figuratively Tris Ford threw up his hands when he got back to Win Shute's room.

The President of the United States had been inducted into office with one dominating ambition, namely, to place a trust magnate behind the bars. While engaged in popularizing himself with the electorate, he had attacked the giant combinations, and especially lambasted the heads of the trusts. Guilt, he insisted, was *personal*, therefore nothing short of a magnate's confine-

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ment in a penal institution would “make the punishment fit the crime.”

But when it came actually to picking the one trust—the one magnate upon whom the presidential wrath was to descend—it was far from an easy assignment. The ramifications of big business were multifarious, and to turn in one direction was to tread on some important body’s money-crusts in another. Ultimately, the President’s own predilections influenced him—unconsciously, of course.

As a boy he had been afraid of firearms of every variety. Hunting held for him no lure. Even when he became first citizen the presidential salute of twenty-one guns made him jump. He much preferred “Hail to the Chief” capably rendered by sounding brass and jingling cymbal. No, the President wasn’t a sportsman. He was an advocate of peace. Thus, unwittingly swayed by his personal bias, the head of the nation selected the president of the Powder Trust for the rôle of horrible example.

J. Pierce Lamont, president of the Pierce Powder Company, was the magnate marked for sacrifice. And the Attorney General, aided and abetted by the Secret Service, got busy, very busy. This was some time before Win Shute was shanghaied, before Imogen Leonard sailed for

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Alexandria, via Genoa, under the name of Miss Riley—as directed by her employer, who explained that her confidential relations with him, big figure in the business world, would subject her to the importunities of interviewers.

Everything was done with unwonted secrecy, considering that it was a government undertaking, and the man hunt was progressing most favourably when, one day, the Washington correspondent of the New York *Standard* called at the White House and requested an interview with the President. The *Standard* was an independent paper which leaned toward the President's party; its support the executive fervently desired for his administrative and legislative program. The *Standard* was a great newspaper, therefore not untinged with "yellow."

The details of that interview will never be known. But it subsequently leaked out that the President, later in the day, made the big mistake of his term in attempting to go over the correspondent's head by appealing directly to the editor. In a word, the President tried to suppress news! Result—"pitiless publicity." (The phrase is quoted because it was the President's own, uttered before election and turned on him when he ran counter to it.) In twenty-four hours the country rocked with indignation.

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An American girl, sole support of a widowed mother, while enjoying her first real vacation in years—a trip to Europe—had been torn from her parent by Italian soldiers, thrown into prison, and there given the “third degree.” Poor, persecuted Imogen Leonard!

Such was the “flash,” in newspaper parlance, that travelled over free America. In more detail:

Miss Leonard was stenographer and private secretary to one of the officers of the Pierce Powder Company. This concern, sometimes called the Powder Trust, because of its command of the industry, had manufactured powder for the Italian Government under a secret formula furnished by Italy—a powder peculiarly adapted for transportation and for use in the tropics. The manufacturing was done by agreement that powder so made was not to be sold to any other country than Italy, excepting, of course, the United States.

In the war with Turkey over Tripoli, Italy found that the Turks were using identically the same powder! And while the Turkish supply could not be directly traced to the Pierce Company, the Italian Government was convinced in its monarchical mind that the American Powder Trust had violated its agreement.

If Italy could prove this, there was a large

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monetary forfeiture provided in the original agreement—something that could be enforced either through diplomatic channels or through The Hague. All that Italy needed was the proof.

Imogen Leonard could furnish the proof! Because of her confidential relations with the head of the trust, Italy believed there was no doubt about it. This was why she had been forcibly taken from the *Colonia* when the steamship called at Genoa and placed under surveillance.

Regardless of party affiliations the press, the country hurled at the White House the verdict—outrage!

The President was not without his excuses. Proof of J. Pierce Lamont's guilt under the criminal section of the Sherman law lay in a secret memorandum whereby the restraint of the powder trade was maintained. This memorandum had been dictated by Lamont to his stenographer, Imogen Leonard, and by her transcribed and mailed unsigned to the smaller, fear-ridden manufacturers of powder. Wherefore Miss Leonard could give testimony that would convict J. Pierce Lamont—land a trust magnate behind the bars!

Unfortunately, Miss Leonard's vacation, comprehending a sea trip at the expense of her employers, was so timed—owing to a leak in the

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United States Attorney's office—that she was beyond the three-mile limit before the Secret Service knew of it. Nothing remained, therefore, but to engage the coöperation of some foreign power in the enterprise of detaining the vitally important witness and effecting her return home—to the witness-box. Italy's fight with the Powder Trust dovetailed into this scheme. Miss Leonard was to be detained by the Italian authorities and pumped, but with the American Ambassador standing by, ready to offer a refuge—and safe return home!

On the part of the Administration at Washington it was Machiavellian, on Italy's part, the execution of America's "third degree." At best it wouldn't look well in print—at worst it would defeat the President's party at the next election. Wisely, the White House kept silent. But the American Ambassador to Italy bestirred himself.

Less than twelve hours after the storm broke in the United States, Imogen Leonard, under the courteous escort of his Excellency John Bismarck, started for Rome to rejoin her mother.

The same day in the White House, after his "shop talk" with the correspondents, the President buttonholed one of the newspaper men with whom he maintained confidential relations, and

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asked him how the story about Imogen Leonard had broken loose. He received this reply:

"The *Standard* got it from its correspondent in Italy. American by the name of Shute gave the tip."

"Not Win Shute—second baseman of the Giant-killers?" inquired the Chief Magistrate.

"Dunno," was the newspaper man's confession. He was not a fan.

The next morning the *Standard* had another gorgeous beat. Its correspondent in Italy had discovered the lost ball player, Win Shute! Followed a most dramatic story of the drugging and shanghaiing of the king of second basemen.

James Winton Shute had *paid in news* for the release of Imogen Leonard!

Out of the horde of Americans who have invaded Europe, three are remembered: General Grant, Colonel Roosevelt, and Pitcher Larkin. Each made his impress, but of these impressionists Barney Larkin contributed by far the most colour. He said when he got back to the Giant-killers' ball park that he might forget his trip abroad, but he didn't think Europe would!

Naples, where the globe-running baseball players landed, was the one place where Barney devoted himself strictly and whole-heartedly to

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sightseeing. Accompanied by Earnest Steadman, his guide, custodian, and friend, he fared forth, with the best intentions to behold every treasure that the city and its environs advertised. But he was first conducted to the Neapolitan Aquarium—and never left it. Here “Damon and Piscatorius” were enraptured with the curious marine wonders of the Mediterranean—cuttle fish, crested blubbers, impossible-looking crabs, crayfish, and pipefish, the electric rays, which Barney, after experiencing a shock, pronounced, “live wires, all right!”

Above all, the eccentric twirler was delighted with the octopus! At home Barney had seen pictures of it in the papers, usually labelled Standard Oil, or Sugar, or Steel, but in a foreign land he saw it in the original—mother of the trusts! He had to be dragged away to the train.

At Rome he announced that he was tired of “lookin’ round.” But some one told him of the Catacombs—cellars where the early Christians were laid on the shelf. He apparently became fascinated with the subterranean phenomenon, and devoured all of the literature he could find on the subject. The reason he gave for visiting the Pantheon was that “twenty-eight wagon loads of the best bones” had been carried there from the Catacombs and planted beneath the altar.

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When he made his excursion to the Roman Catacombs he took Earnest Steadman with him. Apparently he wandered through the galleries absorbed in what he saw. But there was malice aforethought in his wanderings. He succeeded in losing his keeper!

Rome remembers to this day what ensued. The alcoholic eruption ended shortly after midnight. Barney Larkin, a dirty sweater draped togawise about his powerful shoulders, his head bare save for a wreath filched from the tomb of Raphael, paraded up and down the middle of the Piazza di Spagna, pausing only to cool his brow in Bernini's nautical fountain, and proclaimed himself Cæsar! At his heels shuffled the riffraff, tagrag, and bobtail of modern Rome shouting: "Eviv-va l'Amer-i-ca-no!" It required six Roman policemen, reinforced by a pair of Carabinieri, to complete his arrest. The next day he pitched one of the most effective games of his careless career.

This game was staged in the Villa Borghese, where Rome annually engages in the Battle of Flowers. It was a rare occasion, honoured by the King of Italy and his suite, all in brilliant uniform—especially the representative of the cavalry arm who wore a long cape of Alice blue. The diplomatic corps contributed quantities of

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gold lace to render the spectacle even more splendid. It really transcended the posters with which the late Phineas Barnum was wont to commemorate the performances of his circus before "the crowned heads of Europe." Barney Larkin said it beat pitching on ladies' day with the President of the United States looking on—"beat it all hollow."

Tris Ford was in the King's loge, seated next to Victor Emanuel III, to explain the game to his Majesty. In the adjoining box was the American Ambassador. His Excellency John Bismarck had with him Mrs. Leonard and her daughter Imogen Leonard. He had insisted that they be his guests, and as James Winton Shute offered no objection—indeed, offered no conflicting invitation—the ladies had accepted.

Baseball history repeats itself. The Giant-killers went to bat in the last half of the ninth inning with the score 2 to 1 against them. On the first ball pitched, Ryan singled—and the king nodded approvingly at Tris Ford, who was trying to sit unmoved in his chair. The Giant-killers then fooled their opponents—rated as the world's champions—who figured that Olds, the next man up, would bunt. Instead of that, the signal was given for the hit and run, and Ryan sprinted for second base at the same time Olds was swinging at a fast ball. Expecting a bunt,

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the first baseman was almost toppled over by the "grass cutter" and juggled it long enough to let the batter get to first and Ryan to second. A moment later the pair pulled off the double steal. There was a man on third, a man on second, and nobody out!

John Bismer leaned into the adjoining box and whispered to Tris Ford: "Exactly the situation in the last game of the World Series!"

"One big difference," corrected the manager of the Giant-killers, "there ain't the same lad at bat. Watch!"

The man who came to bat in the crisis had a familiar bearing. He carried himself like a figure known to this recital. But his face was either unknown or strangely transformed. The sporting writers at home could have explained this: Those prehistoric caps worn by the Giant-killers! Long had the homely headgear been condemned as something which dated back to the time when baseball was known as "rounders," but Tris Ford wouldn't change. To alter the design might bring bad luck! Now the man at bat was glad that there had been no change. Not a soul—not *the* soul—would recognize him!

He shifted around restlessly at the plate. "Hardest man to pitch to in the league!" he was called.

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"One ball."

"One strike!" he had let it go by.

He moved about, swung his bat, raised his shoulders to let out a kink in his muscles, and, quickly but unostentatiously, pulled down the visor of his cap.

Instantly the runner on third edged off the bag, more and more, and the moment the pitcher lifted his arms and began to wind up he dashed the plate. There was a gasp, for it seemed that the man was rushing in to certain destruction. But the agile youth at bat reached out and deftly tapped the ball! It rolled with exasperating slowness toward the pitcher, who was hurrying to field it.

Up went a shout. The tying run was scored for the Giant-killers! And like unleashed lightning the batsman was making tracks for first base.

At the same time, rounding third and never pausing for an instant, the base runner who had been on second was coming home. Of course he was crazy! The pitcher would look up, see him halfway to the plate, toss the ball to the catcher, and the foolish base runner would be an easy out.

But the pitcher was rattled. Already the score had been tied. He must make sure of one put-out. So, blindly, he wheeled and threw the ball

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to first base. The man who had bunted was out by inches. But—another runner had flashed over the plate!

The Giant-killers had won! When it was explained to him, the king congratulated Tris Ford. The next thing John Bismer got the manager's ear:

"That proves it—proves you have the best team. With the king of second basemen in the game you would have won the world's championship—sure!"

In a grotto of the Borghese Gardens they met right after the game. With his uniform there was no mistaking his profession. He was a ball player. And she had said she didn't care for baseball! Courageously, but not with much confidence, he had submitted to the test. She should look upon him in his true setting—in the pastime he loved. If he was to lose out in the Important Game, as he had come to think of mating, he would be seen playing for all he was worth. And he had so played—had never played better in his brilliant service on the diamond.

"You know now—I'm a ball player," he said.

"And *you* know—I'm a 'stenog,'" she returned.

"Mighty glad you're not a swell," he told her.

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"And I'm glad your side won," she told him.

Then a look of sadness swept over her. His heart almost stood still. Was it the end of the Important Game—and defeat?

"But I'm so sorry—very sorry—that you didn't hit the ball," she assured him.

"When?" He was confused.

"That last time—with two of your own men on bases, nervous to get where they started from! She was very earnest. "I knew you wanted to send the horrid little ball way out—far out so it couldn't be thrown back till after the two men were through running. And you tried—tried so hard, you dear boy. I was so disappointed—for your sake—that you couldn't knock it square—but just rolled it on the ground as I did when I first tried to play golf. If it's any comfort to you, I'm heartsick over it!"

He stared at her, wondering if possibly she could be making fun of him. Then, noting the heartfelt pity in her Irish blue eyes, he said, for the first time: "Imogen!"

And for the first time she answered:

"Win!"

What eventuated was not lost upon Tris Ford, who came that way, with Mrs. Leonard in charge, at the right—or the wrong—moment. To the surprised matron, Tris Ford observed:

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“Say—that young fellow was always the best in the country at pulling the play.”

“What play?” anxiously inquired the mother of Imogen.

“Why—the double squeeze!”

THE JINX

PART I

THE JINX

PART I

AT THE dinner table that night the tired-out clerk from the Terminal offices asked Dart to please pass the bread. With alacrity the star pitcher of the Giant-killers reached down the unfestal board and—winced.

A sharp pain shot clean through his pitching arm and settled, like a congestion of superactive needles, in the elbow. By sheer grit he picked up the plate, supplied the staff of life to the hungry clerk, and dropped his "salary wing" to his side. For several moments he sat stock-still. Cold beads began to form on his brow. His arm was going back on him!

What laryngitis means to the grand opera singer, a blistered foot to the letter carrier, pink eye to the astronomer, lumbago to the ploughman—all this a sore arm means to the pitcher, and more. For it not only incapacitates him from earning his pay check, but brings visions of early retirement from the national game—an end to his career on the diamond. A sore arm,

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therefore, is to be feared as the direst casualty in the pitcher's duel with the batsman.

With Dart the threatened disaster loomed larger still. That morning, as if by prearrangement, the sporting writers had come out boldly and proclaimed that, if the Giant-killers again were to win the pennant and have another try for the world's championship, everything depended on the dependable William Dart—"Smoky Bill" he was called, because of the demoniacal speed of his fast ball. But could the peerless pitcher, taking his regular turn on the mound and doing "rescue" work besides, stand the pace? That was the unforetold factor in the American baseball battle—Dart's ability to pitch his team to final victory. He was the one man, averred the experts, who could stop the onrush of Cleveland, the one twirler who would have a chance against New York this year in the World's Series. In language more adorned, Dart was the *deus* in the baseball *machina*.

And his arm was failing! Every move above the waist gave it pain. Using his knife on the boarding-house "sirloin" was positively agonizing. So he ate but little, gulped down his glass of milk, and bolted for his room.

It was like him, in view of all that depended on that masterful arm, to shut and lock the door,

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pull down the window shade, and close the opaque transom—all before he lighted the gas. Taking off his coat, he faced an imaginary batter, and prepared for the experiment that would tell the whole story.

Slowly he raised his arms, hands together, high above his head, as a diver would poise at the brink, brought himself up on his left foot, extending his supple body until he rested on the tip of his toe, and shot his good right arm out and downward—the motion for his far-famed “fadeaway,” which caused sluggers to swing wildly and miss.

Bill Dart’s good right arm dropped dead at his side!

The great pitcher sat down on his bed and stared at the faded purple morning-glories on the wall. Before his mind surged the events of the day.

In the third game of the mid-September series with Detroit that afternoon, the Giant-killers had given “air-tight” Bill Dart a lead of five runs to work on, and were supporting him faultlessly in the field. Yet with the score 6 to 1 against them in the seventh inning, the Tigers began to bat, despite Dart’s prowess, and when the last man was retired in the ninth, with a runner breaking for the plate, Detroit was but a single run behind—a narrow squeak!

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As Dart was making for the dugout, a garrulous fan, vaulting out of the grand stand, intercepted him and whispered confidently in "Old Reliable's" ear:

"On to you, Smoky Bill—you wuz toyin' wid 'em—just toyin' wid 'em."

Dart's impassive expression gave way, momentarily, to a shadow of a smile—a smile that was no more than skin-deep—but he said not a word. Shaking off the detaining hand, he hurried to the bench, gathered up his sweater, and ducked into the doorway under the stand. Inside he found himself directly behind the team's bench manager, Tris Ford.

"You had that last man struck out, didn't you?" asked Ford.

"Guess so, but the ump didn't see it that way."

"Anything particular to do after you dress?"

Dart shook his head.

"Then drop into my room a minute—something I want to talk over with you."

The pitcher nodded, and headed for the shower. On the way he encountered Dennis, the club rubber.

"Arm all right?" asked Dennis—rather anxiously, Dart thought.

"Y-e-s—but, Dennie, could you come to my

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boarding house to-night? 'Fraid I've got a little cold—nothing serious. Sort of lame all over. Think a good rubdown 'fore I turn in would fix me all right."

"Surest thing you know—what time?"

"Oh, 'long about half-past nine."

"I'll be there on the dot."

Dart patted him on the back by way of saying "Thank you," and joined the perspiring squad in the locker-room. After he had stripped and taken a shower, he began to disguise a famous ball player in the subdued apparel of a plain citizen.

On the street no one recognized William Dart, leading pitcher of the American League. His habit was to dress inconspicuously, almost carelessly. Then, too, he was so splendidly proportioned that he appeared under his actual height and weight. He looked like a cheerful, healthy, wholesome young man about thirty, who made it a practice to mind his own business.

Meanwhile, the manager was "jollyng the newspaper boys." Despite the day's victory, these critics were convinced in their own minds that the team wasn't "going any too good." As if it were news to the man who did the worrying, they reiterated what they had been saying for days, namely, that the pitching staff was "wob-

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bly.” Tris Ford did not attempt to refute the statement. His silence multiplied the questions, for the writers had columns of space to fill. Finally the sporting editor of the *North Star*, who was getting ready to hand out a warning to the Giant-killers, had his say:

“Look here, Tris—has anybody ’cept Bill Dart pitched a game clear through since you got back on the home grounds?”

“How can you develop young pitchers without using them?” sparred Ford. “I rotate them often to give them the experience.” He laughed.

“One swallow don’t make a summer, nor one pitcher a championship team,” growled the baseball interpreter of the *Public Scroll*.

“When I was in Pittsburgh——” began Ford.

“That means we’re adjourned,” said the man from the *North Star*. “We know, Tris—once you made a home run, and the autopsy showed that the pitcher died of mortification.”

Alone, Ford had the face of a serious-minded man, conscious of the heavy responsibilities which bore down upon him. In public, or before any one who might try to read his feelings, he smiled easily and naturally, disarming all concern in those about him. To dissemble his anxiety was an important part of his job.

(And, by the way—as a matter of record,

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nothing more—the manager’s unabridged name was Tristram Carlingford. In the days, over ten years back, when he caught for the Pittsburgh Nationals, his fellow players had stopped short with “Tris,” while the official scorer, a labour-saving deviser, had ruthlessly pared his distinguished Celtic family name down to “Ford.” So now, except in those emergencies when a lawyer’s helper makes you raise your right hand and fork over a quarter with the other, the most popular manager in ball-dom was content to be known and addressed as Tris Ford. “But I do wish they would say Mister Ford,” his wife once complained. Tris smiled his incomparable smile, and, looking round to make sure that they were alone, came back: “Do they say *Mister* Napoleon?”)

Tris Ford had a system of approaching a delicate subject in a circuitous manner. Possibly he thought that he concealed his “lecture” by this procedure; if so, in certain interviews he was wrong. Bill Dart almost always knew what Tris was driving at before the “destination” hove in sight. At the momentous conference after the Detroit game the manager was frowning and playing with the curtain string when Dart entered, but instantly he changed his expression.

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"I was watching those automobiles get away from the gate," explained Ford. "Say—but they hit up a fast pace for the city streets."

"They're easily and quickly controlled," said Dart, in a comforting tone. He knew where they were aiming—toward his black racing car.

"But you can't be too careful—now can you, Bill?"

"I sure am careful."

"Hope so," sighed Ford. He hesitated. "I was rather hoping"—this with a naïve grin—"that you were losing your heart to golf. Now, there's a game! Why—sometimes I think I'll have a try at it myself."

Dart put on an awful face. "Haven't you heard of folks getting hit with golf balls? Terribly dangerous!"

"I'd rather take my chances on a golf course than on a road choked with automobiles—and I'd rather you would," Ford added significantly.

"Tris—nothing over thirty miles an hour till the world emblem's cinched."

"Is it a promise?" Bill Dart nodded in pledge.

Tris Ford let a high sigh get away from him. He was unloading his troubles bit by bit.

Again the discussion began with a remote subject, and this time Dart could not quite guess what the goal was to be.

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"Had a young pitcher recommended to me to-day by Jack Chessman," said Ford—"remember Jack?"

"You bet—first to master the spit ball."

"Set me to thinking about him. 'Member—the Yankees and Red Sox came up to the very last day of the season with the championship undecided. Yankees lost in the tenth inning——"

"—On a wild pitch of Chessman's," finished Dart.

"So they said, so they said," mused Ford. "But, Bill—you know and I know that it wasn't that wild pitch lost the pennant. It was working Chessman to death!"

There was a pause, in which Dart tried to figure what the manager had in mind.

"Chessman didn't lose that pennant," continued Ford. "The manager lost it! With all the wisdom and criticism handed out to the manager by the expert and the fan—both of whom have the advantage of the 'second guess'—I sometimes think that once in a while the manager gets off light. Chessman's manager did."

"Jack didn't have to pitch, probably, if he didn't want to," Dart insisted.

Tris Ford put his hand affectionately on Smoky Bill's broad shoulder. "Son—you'd pitch your arm off for our club; you know you would."

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"For you I would, Tris, but I wouldn't for the club. No club's got a right to ask it of a man—to sacrifice his salary arm! Besides, I don't like to think of myself out of it—retired."

Tris Ford flashed a look of perfect understanding.

"You know what I mean."

Ford nodded.

"You know we say baseball is a guessing contest 'twixt pitcher and batter. You've never pitched, Tris—but, take my say-so, there's a thrill, an exhilaration about it that can't be duplicated in sport or in war. Put a man on second and third—through fielders' errors, for that tries a pitcher's soul in a pinch—with one run needed by your opponents to tie and two to win, and you have a test of brain, skill, and physical prowess I defy you to equal. Oh, there's nothing like it—matching your cunning against the batter's cunning, outguessing him, and stopping the rival team when they're thirsting for gore!"

"Suppose there ain't anything in the class with it," agreed Ford.

"You bet not! Why, I asked the Governor of the State that very question—asked him if it was as hard to hold his place with the organization as it was in the old days to hold his job on the

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pitching staff of the White Stockings. Say—he gave me the laugh.”

“Can you name forty-eight great pitchers in the majors to-day?’ he asks me.

“‘Not a dozen,’ says I.

“‘Well, I can name forty-eight great Governors,’ says he, ‘or I could with the help of the Statesman’s Year Book.’

“Mebbe that didn’t put Governors where they belong,” concluded Dart.

“You love the grand old game, don’t you, Bill?”

“Love it? Say, Tris, you’ll see this—others might not. There was a mayor out West, a big-hearted cuss, who took the people’s side and fought the traction magnates to a fare-you-well. After he died, when his family was laying him away in the cemetery, it came out that he had expressed a wish to be buried under a public playground! He could think of nothing so consoling as the thought that over him were to be happy children, laughing, playing, and enjoying life.”

Tris Ford, after a moment of wonder, flashed the signal of thorough comprehension.

“That was a swell idea, wasn’t it, Bill? But the family didn’t do as he wanted?”

“S’pose they couldn’t—but not so long ago, in this here country, people used to be buried in their parks—their lands, I mean.”

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"Sure thing they did," agreed Ford.

Dart thought a moment, as if choosing his next words with unwonted care; then hurried through with what he had to say.

"Tris, you know I'm an orphan—not a relative this side of the Rockies. And I'm really never happy away from the ball park. My life is there. I'm a great pitcher, they say, but I'll never be near-great at anything else. When I'm done with pitching, I've played my string. I'll get a job of some kind, I suppose—a meal ticket that will state, in plain language, that I'm to get time off to see the Giant-killers play; and you'll see me hanging round the park and rooting hard for the club. But say——" Dart grew animated. "If I was to die in my uniform, so to say, with my spikes on—if I was to cash in while I still rank among the first ten pitchers of the league, will—will you do me a big favour, Tris?"

"Try to—what is it, Bill?"

"Bury me under the pitcher's mound at the ball park!"

Ford looked startled. "You're sure about that, Bill?"

"Ab-so-lute-ly sure. The only monument I care about will be the record in the baseball guide," declared Dart.

"All you'll ever need," said Ford approvingly.

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Then, without further word, he changed the subject—changed it back.

“Going back to Chessman, and the manager’s working him too hard,” said Ford, “there ain’t going to be any championship lost on a wild pitch by Bill Dart, if this manager can prevent it; neither is Bill Dart going to pitch his arm off in one season for a ball club in which this manager is part owner.”

“Who said I was pitching my arm off?”

“’Fraid you won’t say it—that’s the trouble.” Ford looked at Dart sharply. “Don’t like the way you’re carrying that high-priced arm this very minute.”

The temptation of Smoky Bill was instantly to throw something at Tris, just to show the doubting manager how strong that arm was—but he didn’t dare. He turned away and looked out of the window, making believe that a passing machine had attracted his attention. Ford was wise.

“To-morrow we wind up with the Tigers,” ruminated the manager of the Giant-killers out loud. “Then a day’s rest, then beginning Monday——”

“The games that decide the championship,” broke in Dart. “Cleveland’s coming like a Western cyclone.”

“Sure is—only a game and a half behind us to-night.”

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"And Rube Messer—how does his string of wins stand now?"

"Fifteen straight. They plan to use him in two of the three games here."

"Well?"

"Why—if your arm's all right, guess you'll have to break that string of victories, Bill."

Dart nodded. His jaw was set.

"The Rube's got something on us, that's sure," continued Ford. "Been looking up the record. He's beaten us three out of five so far this season. The games he lost you won. You have it two to one on the Rube!"

But Dart didn't enthuse.

"I don't care about starting any other pitcher against Messer unless I have to," apologized Ford. "I don't know—but Cummins and Hawk both lack confidence. If they thought they could beat Cleveland, there'd be nothing to it with our team back of them, but they're apt to go in feeling they're bound to lose."

"Tris, for speed, curves, and control, I haven't a thing on Joe Cummins, and very little on Eddie Hawk."

"But, Bill—you have works under your cap that outclass a Swiss watch, and a heart that has a team beaten before the first man faces you."

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"Thanks, old man." Then, after a look of appreciation: "What do you want me to do?"

"Spend to-morrow and Sunday any way you like, but don't show your face at the ball yard. Forget there's such a national institution as baseball; take it easy; enjoy yourself—but say, Bill, be cautious when you trust yourself to that black racing car."

"Not over thirty miles an hour—I promise."

"Once the Cleveland series is tucked away in our game bag, then you rest up at your ease for the world's championship," said Ford consolingly.

"So long, Tris."

"Take care of yourself, Bill." . . .

"Take care of yourself!" Sitting on the bed in his lonely boarding-house room, after he had recalled every incident of the day that bore upon his present plight, Bill Dart remembered the manager's last words—and groaned. For an instant he cursed fate. Then, controlling his temper and forcing himself to look on the less dark side of the matter, he came by degrees to adopt the most optimistic view of the misfortune which threatened to terminate his professional career.

Perhaps it was merely the result of a twist, and after a day's rest and a careful workout the arm

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would be all right. *It must be.* The main thing now was not to make the slightest mistake in treating the sore wing.

This brought "Bonesetter" Rice to his mind. Rice—known, respected, and thought much of by all pitchers—was *the* authority on sore arms. From New York as from St. Louis, and all the ball towns in between, pitchers set out to consult Rice. It was the first thought that came to a twirler's mind the moment he found something wrong with his precious arm.

The furlough pressed upon him by Manager Ford came to mind. Just the thing! He could run over to see Rice—it was a night's ride on the train—find out what to do, and be back Sunday morning. No one would be the wiser, not even Tris Ford, for he would pledge Rice to secrecy. It was needless, Dart thought, to cause the manager unnecessary worry—Ford had troubles enough with his young pitchers as it was. Besides, why should one confess to a serious weakness? Bill Dart shook his head doggedly at the notion. Like any skilful craftsman, he took pride in his mastery of the pitching art, in the reputation which he bore as "the iron man"—as the pitcher with the "steel whip"—and he wasn't going to own up to any physical back-sliding, however temporary it might be, when

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there was nothing to be gained by such a confession.

As soon as his decision was reached, he feared that there might be a call from some one who would require an explanation. Hastily he took a khaki-coloured raincoat, whose underside was a pronounced plaid (Dart had not noticed the loud lining until after he had paid for the coat and had drenched it in the downpour which necessitated its purchase). He got halfway downstairs before he remembered his "baggage." Going back, he gathered up some pajamas, a clean collar, and a toothbrush, rolled them into a small parcel, and stuffed them into a pocket of his raincoat, pulling the waterproof flap over the telltale evidence of flight.

Out of the house he felt relieved, but he took the "wrong" side of the street (he had a regular way of coming and going), lest he should meet a friend, and made tracks for the garage where he kept the black racer. He wasted no time starting his engine and getting into the car.

"You seem to be in a rush," sang out the night superintendent of the garage.

"I am," answered Dart. "Going off for a little run—don't pitch again until next week—want to get baseball out of my head—won't be back for a day or two."

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"One minute, then," warned the superintendent, who came over to the black racer. "Be careful—your brake band's loose—was just looking at it. Don't take any chances."

"I won't—good night!"

Dart had to grit his teeth when with his sore arm he shifted from first into second, then into top gear. But he could steer with his left hand and rest his lame salary wing on the wheel.

The last the superintendent saw of the Giant-killers' crack pitcher, Smoky Bill Dart was headed in the general direction of City Hall, going about thirty miles an hour.

At ten o'clock that night the waterfront reporter of the *North Star*, Burr by name, telephoned the city desk. He was very much in a hurry, and unwittingly swore at the city editor himself, thinking that Central was slow in giving him the number.

"Bad accident at the ferry," he said to his chief. "Automobile in the river!"

"Anybody in her?" asked the city editor.

"Man driving the car."

"Rescued?"

"No—drowned."

"Who was it?"

"Don't know—nobody knows."

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"Get the number?"

"No—too rapid for any one to get it."

"How'd it happen?"

"Man was the first let on the ferry. He started up fast, ran to the front of the boat, and it's supposed his brakes wouldn't hold. 'Fore anybody knew it, he crashed through the gates and dived into the slip. Car turned over and went under water, running gear up."

"Any other reporters there?"

"Not yet—but report's gone to Police Headquarters and to the Emergency Hospital, and they've sent for the rescue crew from the Breakwater."

"Hold the line."

After a surprisingly short wait, considering the importance of the matter, the city editor resumed the conversation.

"Burr, managing editor and I've decided to hire a diver to go down and get the number of that machine. Drake's car is after a man now—some one we know and can trust. Keep it to yourself—we want a big beat on this! And say—when Drake comes down there with the diver, don't recognize him."

"I'm on," answered Burr.

There was a theatrical moment when the diver, acting secretly for the *North Star*, rose

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to the surface of the ferry slip, opened the hinged "window" of his helmet, paddled to the temporary ladder, and, impeded by his cumbersome diving dress, laboriously climbed a few rungs toward the top. Drake, manager of the enterprise, was on the spot to meet him, paper and pencil ready.

In his rôle of diverting attention from the big business in hand, Burr had taken up his station on the other side of the slip, and had enticed the other reporters to that point of disadvantage—all but one. Ferrett of the *News*, reputed to be the best "newspaper sleuth" in town, was moving about nervously, as if watching for some surprise. And he caught sight of a red automobile tag which the diver drew from under one arm and held up, guardedly, for Drake's inspection.

"The license tag!" Ferrett shouted, and made a rush in the diver's direction.

At this the police woke up.

"Here you—give me that tag!" one of the officers ordered the diver.

"Got the number?" whispered the diver to Drake, who was leaning over.

"Yes," replied the man from the *North Star*.

"Make your getaway 'fore the police stop you. I'll not let them get the number." In louder tone—a voice that rang with obedience—

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he spoke to the policeman: "In a minute, officer, I'll bring it to you. My helmet's slowly boring through my shoulder blade."

He made a great show of adjusting the contrivance, under cover of which dilatory action Drake stole swiftly away to his waiting automobile, which got off with a snort. Hearing the noisy cut-out, the diver slowly began to climb the ladder. He got to the top, slipped, fell down two rungs, and in his fall—dropped the number into the slip! How the police swore! Ferrett, the newspaper sleuth, who had been the first to see the red tag, not only blasphemed, but accused the diver of dropping it on purpose. "Make him go after it," Ferrett urged the nearest policeman.

"You kin lead me to water," said the diver, "but only the long green can make me perform."

"How much?" asked the disconsolate Ferrett.

"For this job—more'n you make in a week, sonny." At this the diver began, in the face of protests of the police, to divest himself of his aquatic habiliments, preparatory to going home. Burr of the *North Star* strolled over to him, feigning indifference in his best manner.

"Suppose you don't remember the number?" he asked, somewhat airily.

The diver, knowing him not, grinned and re-

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plied: "Young man, when I went to school, which was a long time ago, I was powerful poor at figgers."

Dennis, the rubber at the beck and call of the Giant-killers, was by nature and occupation a patient man. Also, of consequence, he worshipped Bill Dart, and would have waited for him all night, if necessary. He was on hand at 9.15—a quarter of an hour ahead of the time fixed by the premier pitcher—and the landlady had let him go right up to Dart's room, for he had been there before.

When 10.30 came Dennis began to feel uneasy—couldn't explain why. Dart was habitually prompt, and, moreover, considerate of others. At 11 Dennis was very nervous. He didn't want to leave; he felt he ought to do something, and he didn't know what to do.

The doorbell rang. Hope rose in Dennis. Perhaps Bill Dart had forgotten the key!

But it was an inquiry about the absent pitcher—most disquieting. The landlady called Dennis down to the door to answer a question. "You don't know me," said the caller, who stood with his face in the shadow. "I'm a newspaper man—wanted to get Dart's views about the proposed baseball fraternity. Don't know where he is, do you?"



The next morning the North Star had a beat on every paper in the city

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"He was to meet me here at 9.30," volunteered Dennis.

"Usually on time, is he?"

"Prompt as the clock you carry."

"Thank you; good night."

At the garage somewhat the same inquiry was made by the newspaper man. The night superintendent told all that he knew without realizing that he was telling anything—when Dart had left, where he said he was going, how long he said he was to be gone, and the direction he took.

"Was his car working all right?" cautiously asked the reporter.

"Now you mention it—I did speak to him about his brake band."

"Brakes!" The reporter snapped up the word. "Something wrong?"

"Band needs relining—but say, why are you asking?" inquired the superintendent, suspiciously.

"To make conversation, I guess," answered the reporter in his most pleasant manner. "I asked first about the car because I wondered if Dart could have got stalled somewhere."

"Oh!" The superintendent turned away as the reporter walked leisurely out of the garage. Tris Ford was called over the telephone. From the manager it was learned that Dart was not expected to report to-morrow, having earned a vacation.

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"Say—leave the lad alone, won't you?" asked the manager.

"Guess we'll have to," replied the editor of sports. "Nothing important to ask him anyhow."

In turn every man on the Giant-killers' squad was called upon or reached by telephone. Not one had seen Dart or heard from him since the day's game.

"That's enough," said the city editor, when the reports were all in. "Write your sketch," he directed the sporting editor. "I'll give you two columns." Then he turned to the head photographer:

"Front page—just his face—two columns. Inside—the old boy in action—delivering his fadeaway."

The next morning the *North Star* had a beat on every paper in the city. The exclusive story bore this caption:

BILL DART DROWNED?

HIS RACER PLUNGES INTO RIVER.
BRAKES FAIL TO HOLD ON FERRY.

Body Not Recovered.

PITCHER LAST SEEN AT WHEEL

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In the main part of the story, before the sketch written by the sporting editor—a splendid tribute to the character and craftsmanship of William Dart—there was a short paragraph reading:

“No one can foretell what effect Dart’s loss will have on the team. It is a crushing blow, and champions, none others, could rally from it. The loss falls heaviest, of course, on the pitching staff. Can Cummins and Hawk rise to the emergency? They are expected to show the true fighting spirit, coupled with a determination to prove equal to their stupendous task.”

The city was stunned. Bill Dart, master pitcher, out of the game—forever? How could the team keep ahead of the fast-flying Clevelanders now? If they did win the pennant, what earthly chance would they have against New York? Only Bill Dart could down the Giants!

The fan, bewildered, clinging to hope and verging on despair, rushed to the ferry, to find out for himself if there was any chance of mistaken identity. The day would tell the story, settle the championship, gladden or break men’s hearts.

PART II

THERE was no game between the Giant-killers and Detroit on Saturday. By telegraphic order of the president of the league the contest was called off. While this made it impossible for the home team to lose, a full game, inasmuch as Cleveland played and won but a single game, separated the two clubs on the eve of their last clash.

Tris Ford, with the officers of the club and many of the players, was downtown before nine o'clock. The manager waited at the City Hall in the private office of the coroner. He would not open his head to newspaper men, but sat, doubled up in a chair, a halftone of despair.

Divers, working with a steam hoist attached to a tug, were busy at the ferry slip. At about eleven o'clock the automobile was slowly lifted out of the water and into view of the crowd at the ferry, kept back by ropes and by the ungentle police. There was a suppressed groan from the crowd when the machine was poised in mid-air in the bright sunlight. Every one

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saw at a glance that it was a black racing car!

"Have they got the body?" was the gruesome whisper that went from lip to lip.

After a long wait the word was passed round that the driver of the car had been found wedged in between the seat and the steering wheel, and that the machine had dropped like a plummet, to the bottom, landing, wheels up, on the cruel rocks. (Originally the slip had been blasted out of solid stone.)

"Identification impossible!" was the next word that leaped from man to man in the waiting throng. "Driver of car crushed beyond recognition."

It turned out, however, when the coroner had taken a hand, that there was evidence upon which to base identification. The victim of the accident had worn a khaki-coloured raincoat with a plaid lining. This Tris Ford reluctantly identified as like the coat in which he had often seen Bill Dart. But there was more decisive evidence:

In the pocket of the raincoat were found a pair of pajamas, a turndown collar, and a toothbrush. The pajamas were initialled in red—"W. D." Inquiry established the fact that Dart's landlady had sewn these red letters in the pajamas with her own hand.

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In the neckband of the collar, put there with indelible ink, was a letter and figures, evidently a laundry mark—"Y 888." This was checked up by the landlady. It proved to be the mark assigned to William Dart!

Tris Ford, who appeared dazed by the awful calamity that had befallen his club and by the personal bereavement which he had suffered, had nothing to say at the coroner's inquest. He was asked, *pro forma*, if he could identify the body as that of William Dart. He answered, almost in a whisper, that he could not. But the coroner didn't seem to want further identification. He waited until evening, to see if Dart was heard from. Then he gave out a short statement notifying the public that William Dart, a professional baseball player, had accidentally met death by drowning, said accident being due to the failure of the brakes of his automobile to hold on the ferryboat.

It was short and cruelly exact. With it every cherished hope of the fans glimmered and faded away. Immediately there was born in the breast of the partisan rising anger at Fate. The Giant-killers were hoodooed—"the jinx" had them. Curses on "the jinx!"

Then came intense hatred of the Clevelanders. In their wild wrath there were those who actually

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charged that a crook hired by Cleveland had tampered with the brakes on Dart's car!

For rage unfettered, civilization knows nothing like the fan who is robbed of the victory he has counted on. That is why the poor umpire is set down, oftentimes, as the most despicable creature on God's green diamond.

Tris Ford, bowled over by the verdict of the coroner, saw to it that an undertaker well known to him—the Republican leader in Ford's division of the ward—took charge of the body. It was placed in a casket and then conveyed to Ford's own house.

Sunday's papers announced that the funeral services would be public at three o'clock that afternoon, but that burial would be at ten o'clock Monday morning and would be private.

It was not until after the services Sunday afternoon that Tris Ford would talk with the newspaper men. What he had to say was all about Bill Dart—the finest tribute ever a man received from his boss.

Some one asked about the last conversation that Ford had with the peerless pitcher. Ford explained that it was after the game on Friday, and that the talk had to do with Dart's taking a short rest, to get in trim for the Cleveland series.

"I had him down to pitch the first game and

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possibly the third," said the manager. "I counted upon sending him against Rube Messer—twice if the Rube went in to pitch two games against us. And he was not only willing but eager to bear the brunt of the most important series of the year.

"There's a pitcher," said Ford, speaking with emotion, "who never has to be urged to go to the mound. Always in condition, always prepared to do his level best, and always thinking that he has a little something on the other team—the brainiest, the greatest pitcher that ever wore a toe plate."

Every reporter present took notice that Tris Ford used, not the past, but the present, tense in speaking of Bill Dart. They sympathized with his unwillingness to admit that his friend had been taken away. One man only made bold to raise the point. It was Ferrett of the *News*, who was smarting under the beat that the *North Star* had put over the day before and was intent on getting even.

"Mr. Ford, you speak of Dart as if he——"

"I know what you are going to say," interrupted Tris Ford—"don't say it! Whatever you or I may think, the influence of a man like Bill Dart can't be measured in days or months or years. He'll be with us not only the rest of

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this season but seasons to come—don't forget that."

Silently the group of newspaper men filed out. Ferrett, apparently subdued by the manager's impressive words, was at the end of the line. To the man next to him he signified his intention of going back and apologizing to Tris Ford, for fear he might have hurt his feelings. This he did.

Facing the leader of the Giant-killers alone, and looking him straight in the eye, Ferrett, in the nicest way he knew, begged the manager to tell him if there wasn't something Dart had said which Ford had forgotten to repeat. Tris Ford shook his head. Ferrett bore down on him:

"Not a last word—something, now, in the light of what's happened, you might construe as a sort of last request?"

Ford thought a moment. There was sadness in his voice when he spoke. "I'm afraid you wouldn't understand—thinking of it, I don't believe anybody would," said Ford simply. "I could talk to Dart as to no other man, and I guess he could talk to me in about the same way. That's how he came to tell me what he did—what I'm afraid you wouldn't understand." There was an uncomfortable pause, while Ferrett tried to appear unconcerned. Not to be

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too eager and to be eager enough required a finished actor. Ferrett could merely await developments. Finally—it seemed like the lapse of an hour—Tris Ford went on:

“Bill Dart’s life was on the diamond. He cared for nothing as he did for the game. He and I were alike in that. And he told me, in a way that I couldn’t fail to understand, that if he died when he still ranked among the first ten pitchers of our league, he—he would like to be buried under the pitcher’s mound at the ball park.”

Ferrett didn’t care a hang for baseball, and this sensational disclosure put him in a sorry plight. Baseball averages were as foreign to his private store of knowledge as the latest quotation on British consols. For all he knew Dart might now rank forty-seventh among the pitchers—and he didn’t dare ask. For the manager might read in this ignorance a woful lack of understanding of Dart’s unprecedented last wish.

“Records don’t mean everything,” said Ford, after a trying interval.

“I should say not!” exclaimed Ferrett, taking a chance.

“The pitcher who stands number one, ahead of Dart, for instance, has gone to the mound in only twelve games. Dart, on the other hand, has taken part in forty games this season.”

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"I never realized that," admitted Ferrett.
"And yet he stands second, doesn't he?"

"He did in the averages last given out—about a week ago," said Ford.

"So——" Ferret hesitated.

"He's in the first ten," finished Ford; then was silent.

Gathering courage, Ferrett asked the all-important question:

"And his last wish—will you do as he requested?"

Tris Ford's look seemed far away. At first he didn't appear to hear. Then he said, speaking as if to a distant friend:

"I would do anything in my power to comply with a request of Bill Dart's. He will never have an equal."

Ford turned away, signifying that the interview was over, and Ferrett went out hugging a big story to his bosom.

Along toward midnight, Jerry Potts, official groundkeeper for the club, opened the press gate at the ball park and took a rapid survey of the street corner.

It was dark, pitch dark, but the big arc light drove its rays into every crevice of the concrete structure within the immediate vicinity. Jerry shut the door after him and walked to the corner.

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Out of a closed gateway, at sound of his foot-fall, popped a man. At sight of the stranger Jerry stopped short as if startled, but instantly he gathered confidence and went forward.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, cheerily.

"Good evening."

It was Ferrett who spoke.

"Nights getting cold, ain't they?" piped Jerry.

"Certainly are."

"Waiting for a car?"

"Y-e-s; slow a-coming."

"Say, brother—it's a raw night, and I never likes to perch on the rail alone; join me in a little all right, won't you?"

Ferrett neither accepted the invitation nor declined, but looked searchingly first down one street and up the other. Then, without a word, and half-heartedly as his lingering steps indicated, he accompanied Jerry Potts to the saloon on the next corner.

No sooner had the swinging doors closed behind the pair than the big gates at the park swung open, and from beneath the grand stand noiselessly crept a black undertaker's car, horseless—propelled by electricity. There was something long and narrow about the sombre body that was ghastly. The man at the wheel shut

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off the power, jumped down, and dodged into the park. Instantly the gates were shut.

When Ferrett and Jerry Potts returned, there stood the spectral conveyance—silent as the grave but with a significance that could not be refuted.

“What’s that?” exclaimed Ferrett, who, though he expected something of the kind, was startled when he came upon it so suddenly.

“Looks like an undertaker’s joy wagon to me,” answered Jerry lightly.

“What’s it here for?” asked Ferrett.

“Search me,” replied Jerry. “Guess it stopped at the wrong gate.”

“Wrong gate?” questioned Ferrett.

“Farther along down the street there’s a gay-ridge,” explained Jerry. “Good night, brother.”

“Wait a minute—say—I never saw the inside of a ball park at night. Give me a peep, won’t you?”

“Posi-tive-ly against orders—sorry, brother—hope to see you again.” And Jerry Potts, as if working in unison with some one on the inside, slipped into the enclosure and fastened the gate before Ferrett could say another word.

But not so easily was the “best newspaper sleuth” to be denied. Looking across the street, the resourceful reporter saw in a flash that the third story of the houses must necessarily com-

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mand a view of the interior of the park, while from the roof one could look down on the scene, whatever it was to be, as from the gallery to the stage of a theatre.

The rest was easy. He picked out a house which displayed a light at this late hour, and "expense money" did the trick.

For a time Ferrett shivered in the cold autumn air which swept the roof. The park was dark and lifeless. But at last, as a reward for his vigilance, he believed that he could make out the sound of muffled voices. It stirred his sluggish blood and fought back the cold. Finally a light appeared, then a second light. They were lanterns, and they flickered in the strong wind, so that all Ferrett could distinguish was a small group of dark figures proceeding slowly to a point of destination in the grounds. When they halted he felt reasonably certain that it was on the pitcher's mound.

All of a sudden he thought to look at the time of night. This he did by striking a match in the lee of the chimney. Twelve-thirty! No story, except some great disaster, could get on the first page of the city edition (the last) if copy wasn't in by one-fifteen. And he was fully a half-hour's ride from the office of the *News*.

Ferrett shot one last look at the park. Every-

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thing was still, funereally still. The lights were stationary upon the turf. He surmised that they were about to lower "it" into the ground, if they had not already done so. With regret he turned his back on the secret ceremony, hurried below to the street, and ran for the trolley

For the fan, Monday morning, the papers were full of news. There was, first, the account of the funeral services at Manager Ford's home. In another column there was the talk that the newspaper men had with Tris Ford. And there was the "dope" on the Cleveland series, which was to open that day.

Cleveland was but a single game behind, the fan was reminded—as if he didn't know it! The two teams were tied in their season's series. Rube Messer had beaten the Giant-killers three out of five so far, and the two games which the mighty lefthander had lost Dart had won! Who could stop the Rube? the sporting writers asked.

Just to arouse the ire of the fan and make the rooter fighting mad, ready to back up the team to the last ounce of his lung power, the baseball critics recalled, quite incidentally of course, some unpleasant things about the Rube. Once he had hit "Home-run" Holt of the Giant-killers a

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blow on the head, the ball glancing off, thanks to Holt's agility. There were those sitting near the plate who charged that the Rube had tried to put the star batter out deliberately. The sporting writers deprecated such talk—but warmed it over for the occasion.

Rube Messer was one of the ball players who had sold his name for newspaper purposes. He could with difficulty give utterance to a grammatical sentence, much less compose one on paper, but he received a tidy sum every week for permitting his name to be signed to syndicated "dope" on the baseball situation. For much of this stuff he was not directly responsible, but he hated the Giant-killers, as everybody knew, and there was no doubt in the minds of the team and their friends that the Rube had inspired the charge that they would quit if a club went after them hard enough—that the misnamed Giant-killers had a yellow streak!

How the fans howled at this! And the sporting writers, again deprecating, reprinted this trouble-making characterization. Small wonder that the Rube's coming was awaited with intense bitterness and determined opposition.

The *News*, however, had the big story of the day—a beat that caused people to forget all about Saturday's scoop of the *North Star*. It

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was a first-page story, done in Ferrett's melodramatic manner.

Bill Dart was buried at the ball park! In accordance with his last wish, expressed the day of the fatality to Manager Ford, he was laid to rest, about midnight, beneath the pitcher's mound!

The entire town was yanked up and put down again upon its head. By ten o'clock nothing else was talked about.

Everywhere reporters were searching for Tris Ford. He could not be found. At his house it was said that he had gone out early. At the park the gatekeeper had strict orders to admit no one. How many persons, or how often the same person, tried to get the manager on the telephone, first at his house and then at the park, of course cannot be estimated. But before eleven o'clock both lines were reported "out of order."

Naturally the home players were the next to receive visits from the newspaper men. They knew nothing—showed it plainly by their live curiosity.

The Hotel Imperial, where the Clevelanders put up, was the final goal of the news gatherers. How would the visiting team take it?

Buckingham, called, because of his unripe age, "the boy manager," pretended not to believe

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the story, but long before noon he had wired to the league president, demanding an immediate inquiry.

Rube Messer was a study. It was generally known of him that he refused obstinately to pitch whenever the team passed a funeral procession on the way to the game, and that he would beg to go in out of his turn if a load of hay was encountered—that meaning certain victory. He carried a horseshoe in his suitcase, wore a rabbit's foot tied to a string about his neck, would not let a team mate sit in his place on the bench, which was next to the water cooler, and swore violently if any one made a move to touch his fielder's glove. This he stuffed into his back pocket when leaving the mound at the end of an inning—never tossed on the grass, as every other pitcher did. Notwithstanding all this superstition he could pitch with a degree of perfection that defied criticism.

After he had read the *News*, the Rube shut up like the storied clam. No one could get a word out of him and everybody tried. The local reporters formed a circle about Messer in the hotel lobby and pelted him with question after question. To every suggestion he was indifferent until Ferrett came along, listened to the ex parte discussion, and fired one shot at Messer.

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"Would you pitch standing on a dead man's grave, fresh made?"

The Rube answered with a look at Ferrett, turned to the elevator, and ascended to his floor. Buckingham followed in the next car.

The Giant-killers' ball park will hold 30,000 people if ropes are stretched in the outfield. Estimating the number crammed into windows and upon housetops, 35,000 must have seen something of that unique game. Nothing like it had been staged before nor has been since.

True, no person not among the lucky ones present will believe this, but that game was played two-thirds through in dead silence. Even the coaches stood silent at their posts. For over an hour the performance was not unlike two teams of deaf mutes contesting before their own people. It was as if spectator and player lacked the nerve to speak.

Then, again, the game was perfectly played by both teams. Cummins, who faced the Cleveland sluggers for the Giant-killers, was as steady and as capable as if he had pitched ten years in major-league company instead of a single season. Behind him the home club performed like eight supermen.

Cleveland fielded brilliantly and with pre-

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cision. As for Rube Messer, he gave every indication of being as cool and as unconcerned as if he were throwing them up to his team mates in batting practice on the home lot.

For six and a half innings not a man of either team got as far as second base. The game was a pitchers' duel, with little to choose between the two men, although Messer had the more strike-outs to his credit.

The scribes, who sat in the upper pavilion directly back of the plate, never agreed as to precisely what happened—or what the real cause of it all was. It occurred in the last half of the seventh. One man of the Giant-killers had been retired by the Rube on strikes, and the "port sider" had one strike on the next batter.

Out of the stillness came a sound, low at first, then perceptibly becoming louder. If it wasn't a moan, then no human being could let loose a moan that would carry so bloodcurdling a quality.

Heads were turned, first in one direction and then in another, to discover whence it came. When the spectators turned their attention back to the game, the umpire was calling balls. Rube Messer, a wild look on his eccentric face, pitched twelve balls without putting over a single strike!

There were three men on bases and only one

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out when the manager motioned the troublesome left-hander to leave the mound. Rube Messer resented being taken out for some strange reason. He walked around on the diamond, between first and second, aimlessly and petulantly, and at last the umpire had to order him to go to the bench. Still he loitered, retiring finally after an act never to be forgotten and which was fraught with significance. The Rube advanced slowly, almost cautiously it seemed, toward the pitcher's mound, then threw back his arm and hurled the ball with all his might at the clay on the mound!

A murmur of suppressed horror at the meaning of the deed escaped from the crowd; then the anger of the fan, long pent up, broke out, and the Rube was hissed every step of the way back to the dugout.

In that fateful inning a long fly to the outfield scored a man from third base—the one run of the whole game. At nightfall the Giant-killers were two full games in the lead. The evening papers contained the telegram of the president of the league and the telegraphic answer, if it could be so construed. The messages read:

“What about *News* story that you have buried player in your park?—BANCROFT.”

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**"Have authorized publication of no such story.—
THIS FORD."**

Buckingham, dissatisfied with the results of his first complaint, and "sore" over the loss of the game, telegraphed the National Commission, asking that the next day's game be postponed, pending a thorough investigation of the reported burial, but that it be played at a later date before the championship was awarded. The supreme court of baseball, as the commission was called, pleaded lack of jurisdiction, but offered this suggestion to the Cleveland manager:

"If dissatisfied with club officials' explanation, consult local police and health authorities.—NATIONAL COMMISSION."

Buckingham jumped at this proposal. If a player *was* buried in the park, a burial permit must have been issued—otherwise it was plainly illegal and steps could be taken immediately to force disinterment.

All this was right and reasonable, according to State law, and in complete agreement with the municipal ordinances. But Buckingham recked not with the partisan sympathies of those com-

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posing the local government. City Hall was swarming with supporters of the Giant-killers, and every expedient known to the tardy administration of justice was resorted to and "encored." Everywhere Buckingham's emissaries were met with cold politeness and a meaningless promise to "sift the matter to the bottom." One wag remarked:

"Before City Hall moves against the Giant-killers the ground and the regions far beneath will be frozen."

The next day, before a crowd of equal size, but full of life and noise, a young pitcher by the name of Hawk faced Cleveland, determined to down the contenders as Cummins had done. Buckingham sent to the treacherous mound one of his less flashy but most reliable pitchers. Cy McLain pitched a grand game of ball, all things considered, but at that young Hawk outshaded him—final score 4 to 3 in favour of the home team. Rain spoiled the set-to scheduled for the following day, and Cleveland left town three full games behind the Giant-killers. This, with but ten games in the schedule to be played, was almost a safe lead.

It leaked out, when the Clevelanders had departed, that after the first day's game Rube Messer broke training and was ordered home.

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Came a day and a double-header with Washington, when Cummins and Hawk showed their mettle and each scored a shutout. The next morning the press proclaimed, in huge type and with appropriate cartoons, another pennant won! A large part of the credit was given to the two young pitchers, who had risen equal to the task imposed upon their inexperienced shoulders. They were voted the "freedom of the city" and a fund started to buy each of them an automobile.

At once, as per the calendar of sports, the writers in this most interesting department of the news began the discussion and speculation anent the World's Series. Man for man the Giant-killers were compared with New York, coming champions in the National League. Experts never agree, of course, else they would not be distinguished as experts, but "the consensus of expert opinion," boiled down, and translated into simple language, produced this result:

Giant-killers: superior in fielding and stronger at the bat.

New York: faster on the bases and far superior in the pitching department.

As a matter of record, no baseball writer of prominence, either at home or in New York, made bold to say, prior to the big event, that the youngsters, Cummins and Hawk, could hold

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their own against the veterans, Christopher, Dresler, and Moss. It was asking too much—and no fair-minded follower of the Giant-killers did ask it. So the odds the night before the first game in New York were 10 to 6 on the Giants.

Asked what his team's chances were, Tris Ford smiled—some said for the first time since the black Friday before the Cleveland series—and replied:

“All I care to say is, they will be hard-fought games.”

In New York's majestic stadium, built to measure for 40,000 people, there is a hole or opening in the concrete wall in the outfield. If you were a rooter for the Giants the first day of the World's Series, you kept your eyes glued on that opening, and when John Marlin and his men appeared you released the throttle to your lungs. Then you settled back, while the Giants arranged their bats and deposited their sweaters on the bench, and waited curiously for a look at the visitors. But if you were a stranger in Manhattan, and were there to aid and abet the job of Giant-killing, you reserved your lung power for the coming of the forces led by Tris Ford.

Of the 40,000, therefore, probably 39,976 were looking at that hole in the concrete when a face

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appeared, then an athletic torso, then a tall, lithe, trained-to-the-minute ball player, then——

A gasp from the visiting rooters! One man fainted—so much is authoritatively known—and startled expressions came to countless faces, particularly to those showing evidences of repeated imbibing.

That tall, lithe player in the uniform of the Giant-killers was—Bill Dart!

Baseball writers, armed to the pencil point with swift-moving, deliciously colloquial, newly invented words, have told and retold how Bill Dart “came back.” How, pitching as never before in his career—his fast ball like the shadow cast by a frightened jackrabbit, his fadeaway as elusive as a dollar in hard times—he won two games from the Giants, while, in between, Cummins and Hawk were each annexing a victory. How a new record was hung up—four straight. How the gamblers cried out in dire distress, claiming that baseball wasn’t on the square when a great pitcher like Dart could be kept concealed in the team’s bat bag, so to speak, and produced after the odds had been established “according to the immutable law of supply and demand” and before the umpire had ordered, Play ball. How Tris Ford had smiled his incomparable smile and been content to reply:

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“Didn’t I say the games would be hard fought?” How, from one end of the land of baseball to the other, families were threatened with sunderance because of the two unanswered questions: Where was Dart when his car turned turtle? and, Who was buried under the pitcher’s mound?

For the sake of peace in the American family—specifically, every family that numbers at least one baseball fan, which doesn’t leave households enough to populate Rhode Island in neighbourly fashion—for the sake of domestic peace, to be preferred over world peace any old time, it is perhaps just as well to insert here, word for word, the short statement written out by Dart himself, at the earnest request of the American Association of Newspaper Editors:

“To answer the questions of my many friends, this is what happened to me while I was absent from the team:

“It is true, let me say, first, that I had expressed to our manager the wish to be buried under the pitcher’s mound. Tris Ford understood this, but apparently no one else can. I therefore withdraw my request and ‘put myself in the hands of my friends,’ as the politician would say.

“What I kept from our manager, because he had troubles enough, was that I was suffering

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from a sore arm—the first, to amount to anything, in my career on the diamond. The arm grew worse, and after dinner that night I decided to take advantage of the leave of absence given me and pay a visit to Bonesetter Rice.

“I took my automobile partly to cover up where I was going, but mainly to land me at a flag station in time for the night express to Pittsburgh. This station I chose for two reasons: (1) Because no one in the ticket office would recognize me; (2) because I knew of an unoccupied barn nearby where I could leave my machine, having discovered the place when looking for something to repair a broken spring.

“The car I put in the barn, and locked the gear shift with a small padlock. As it was a mild, clear night, I left my raincoat in the machine, forgetting all about the things in the pocket in my rush.

“Near the barn I encountered a man. I looked at him suspiciously, and he looked at me suspiciously. I believe now that he filed off the padlock, took my car, put on the raincoat as a sort of disguise, and chose the shortest route to get out of the State. Once across the ferry he would be less liable to detection. You all know what happened to the poor fellow.

“When I woke up in Pittsburgh next morning

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my arm was so stiff I had to ask the porter to help me dress—couldn't button my collar or tie my necktie. I was halfway discouraged, for I realized that I was in for trouble with my salary whip. Bonesetter Rice was less than an hour's ride away, and so—just as people put off going to the dentist when they ought to—I delayed starting for Rice's place. I knew beforehand what he would say—'Give it a rest!' And the team needed me, I then thought.

"I loafed around until eleven o'clock, when the first edition of the afternoon papers came out. To my amazement I read that I was reported drowned!

"Of course my first idea was to telegraph Manager Ford, taking my tip from Mark Twain, and say: 'Report of my death greatly exaggerated.' But something made me go off to a quiet spot and think it over. I was struck by the paragraph in the *North Star's* story, which the Pittsburgh papers had in full, putting the responsibility squarely up to Cummins and Hawk. I was sure, from watching them work, that they had the stuff. All they needed was confidence, or something to spur them on to meet a big crisis. Perhaps this situation would do it.

"Anyhow, it seemed to me worth trying, especially as I couldn't possibly be in condition to pitch Monday. The chances were that Cum-

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mins and Hawk would do better with no old pitcher to fall back on—certainly better than having a helpless flinger warming the bench. I made up my mind to see how it worked, in the first game at least.

“It worked fine—worked in the series—and so I kept myself under cover. After Cleveland was beaten—and don’t let any one fool himself, for it was the pitching of Cummins and Hawk did it—I appreciated the fact that my one job was to get ready for the World’s Series. I went to an electrical appliance store and bought a 200-candlepower lamp—one of those long boys, built like a baseball bat, that we players call an ‘electric baker.’ First, I rested my arm; then, with the help of oil, I baked it; then I gave it an easy workout; then another bake; then every day a workout, until I was as good as ever.

“Where did I do this? The baking—in the city’s biggest hotel. The workouts—in the Pittsburgh National’s ball park. I fixed it up with the groundkeeper to let me work there early mornings, before any of the players got around. He thinks yet, I’ve no doubt, that I am a crazy would-be phenom trying to break into the big league. But he will get a present and a surprise at Christmas from yours truly. Yes—I came back.

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"There are two matters I want to correct: If I hadn't shown up, Cummins and Hawk would have won four games against the Giants just as surely as they won two games. Don't overlook that important fact in handing me something I don't deserve.

"Also, Tris Ford—the squarest man that ever devoted his brains to baseball—knew absolutely nothing about my whereabouts—didn't know that I was alive—until shortly before the World's Series. I didn't telegraph or write him at first because he is so square that I feared he would give me away—and thus take from the young pitchers the incentive they needed. When I did write to him, he sent me back a characteristic letter. Here it is:

"SON DEAR: Heaven be praised! I'm relieved, but I never once gave you up. The evidence was all one way—conclusive, they said. I'm no arguer, so how could I make a fat-headed coroner see that *no man with the stubby fingers of the poor devil that stole your car could ever pitch your fadeaway*. And say—some folks seem to want to believe anything. Take your time about coming back.

"Yours truly, TRIS FORD."

One bright, bracing day when the "stove league" season was in full blast, Ferrett, really

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by accident, for he was absorbed in a fascinating mystery which baffled the police and therefore presented excellent opportunities for a newspaper sleuth, found himself face to face with the Giant-killers' ball yard. He gazed upon the massive, concrete structure with mingled feelings of curiosity and chagrin. His roving eye sought out the press gate, whence the convivial Jerry Potts had come, and—the gate opened.

Not Jerry Potts, but the manager of the club, Tris Ford, appeared. He was in high spirits—that one could see at a glance—and he started off at a swift pace to do his five miles before dinner. He passed so near to Ferrett that the man from the *News* could not avoid a greeting.

"How d'do, Mr. Ford."

"Why—how are you, Mr. Ferrett—fine day?"

"Very fine. But please—just a word."

Ford slowed down, and Ferrett walked by his side.

"They say I'm a great reporter," began Ferrett.

"I've no doubt of it," said Ford positively.

Ferrett continued as if there had been no interruption. "I'm not sure to this day whether you led me on, or whether I led myself on—it doesn't matter. But tell me one thing——"

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Ford looked a trifle uncomfortable.

“Who was buried under the pitcher’s mound?”

Tris Ford hesitated, then smiled his incomparable smile, and answered:

“The jinx.”



A TREEFUL OF OWLS

A TREEFUL OF OWLS

NEAR the Giant-killers' ball park was a clean little barber shop patronized by the champions, including the manager, Tris Ford. Among the regular customers was Andy Yelliott, and, reclining cheek by jowl, the humble but voluble Andy and the famous but reticent Tris became pretty well acquainted.

Andy's great sorrow in life was that Tris Ford shaved himself, and so came to the barber's not oftener than twice a month in pursuit of a hair cut. Andy frequented the shop for shaves as well as "trims," and also in search of current literature, which comprehended stories, jokes, and illustrated biographical matter relating to the diamond, the prize ring, and to the anatomy of stageland. He went every day so that he might not perchance lose a chat with Manager Ford.

You rightly conclude that Andy was a baseball fan. Also, and this is germane to our tale, he was that rare anomaly, a fan with weak lungs. This was neither a joke nor a tragedy. To baseball he attributed his successful warfare

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against the white plague, and the specialist concurred. He was told that he could with safety remain at home summer and fall, simply because he spent so much of his time in the open air at the ball park, but that after the baseball season—the end of the year in his calendar—he must hie himself to New Mexico.

“Sent to the bushes,” Andy called it. But boasted: “I’ll come back!” And he invariably did—for the first invasion of the Western clubs.

It was early in November that Tris Ford received a special-delivery letter, postmarked Deming, N. Mex., from Andy Yelliott. There was a wonderful catcher on the Deming Club, John Smith by name, and not a day should be lost in getting his name to a contract. “He reminds me,” wrote Andy, “of old Buck Ewing—honest!”

Letters of this nature came to Tris Ford sometimes to the number of twenty a day. There were fans scattered from the sand lots of Maine to the bushes of California who were constantly striving to bolster up the Giant-killers with new material.

Tris Ford’s policy was to answer every one of these letters. Each reply made him a friend, and, although he tried out comparatively few of the players recommended, there was always the chance that one of these volunteer scouts might

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some day turn a potential star Ford's way. There was Win Shute, the top-notch second baseman, who came to the Giant-killers in the oddest manner—an unpublished bit of baseball history.

So, of course, Tris meant to acknowledge Andy Yelliott's communication. His intention was to write the faraway fan a friendly letter, fully two pages in length. Thus the recommendation appertaining to one John Smith was carefully laid aside and mislaid. What was unusual with him, Tris Ford, methodical and systematic, forgot all about the letter.

At the time the manager of the Giant-killers was long on catchers. You can see that, if you happened to have a capable cook, industrious, uncomplaining, and with a good disposition (perhaps this is overdrawn), you probably would not be interested in a tip that So-and-so was both an expert Diana of the range and available.

Of course any good ball player could be traded—exchanged for a player of another club; a catcher swapped for a pitcher. But when a manager is strongly fortified with catchers, for example, he pays less attention to tips on back-stops. Particularly, as in baseball, many are called out but few deliver the goods.

After a week came a telegram from Andy, reading:

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"Did you get my letter about catcher? Don't lose Smith. He's a comer."

Finding that Deming was on the transcontinental, Ford wired back:

"If I winter in California, will stop off and look him over. Regards."

Two days before Manager Ford started for the Coast he received word that Ira Landis, his star catcher, had been shot in the leg while hunting. Nothing serious, but—some doubt about his taking his regular turn behind the bat earlier than July!

The day before taking the train, Tris telegraphed Andy Yelliott that he was coming and would stop off at Deming. Back ticked this reply:

"Too late—Smith going to college."

Tris Ford wrinkled his forehead over this telegram as he ate his farewell dinner at home. Finally he decided that "College" was the telegrapher's mistake—that Andy meant "Chicago." And he dismissed John Smith from his plans with this mental observation: "Well, Jimmy Harahan may have a good man." Jimmy managed the Chicago White Sox.

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The difficulty with this story is that it has two beginnings—the root of all the complications. Here we make a fresh start. Action—contemporaneous.

At Albuquerque, N. Mex., waiting “to engage,” were two mining engineers, graduates of a New England college, which they revered, and of a technical school in New York, which they respected. They were nine years out of college, and in the interim much had happened in that ancient and honourable institution. Change had brought about new and severe standards relating to intercollegiate athletics. “Eligibility rules” had come into full force and blighting effect since the time one of these grads played end rush and the other quarter-back, and both played summer baseball unmolested.

In their antiquated view any man was eligible for a college team who was *in* college, provided only that he possessed the essential athletic skill. They hadn’t forgotten Larry Maloney, best drop-kicker of his day and a first baseman of excellence, who had played in vacation on a minor-league club under the name of Wagner. The grads remembered that everybody in college respected Maloney all the more because he was good enough for New Bedford.

But times had altered, and the mining engi-

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neers in waiting didn't know it. Many a night, after making an inventory of their none-too-rosy prospects, they would slide easily back into the jovial past, live again their undergraduate days, and wish—wish that they could do something truly fine for the “old coll.”

The opportunity presented itself—or himself—on Thanksgiving Day. There was an institution of higher learning at Albuquerque, to which the grads referred disdainfully as a “brain corral.” Every year, in the fashion that long since had been discarded in the East, Thanksgiving was profaned by a football game played between the varsity at Albuquerque and what was called the All-New-Mexico eleven.

The grads were at the game this year of our recital, a little toplofty, as befitted the sons of one of the oldest colleges in America, but prepared to give temperate support to the varsity. Home pride dictated this allegiance. Besides, the contest was looked upon as an unfair struggle between amateurs and professionals. There was not a man on the All-Mexico team who was not playing for a share of the “gate.” And the most gifted player of the visitors was a professional ball player from Deming—a half-breed Indian whose name was Arrowsmith.

The two grads remained loyal to the varsity

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until the teams lined up and the ball was kicked off, landing in the arms of Arrowsmith.

Quick as a hundred-yard man, the Indian was off down the field, the pigskin tucked securely under one arm, the other free to ward off attack. His team-mates endeavoured to interfere for him, but he was too fast for them. Through the opposing varsity he squirmed like a snake—like old “Snake” Ames of Princeton, declared the grads. Before any one realized it, Arrowsmith got by the last man who barred his progress and planted the ball between the goal posts! Forgetting their good intentions to root for the home team, the two grads let loose their lungs in old-time abandon. It was unfettered acclaim for a worthy warrior of the gridiron.

After this the game was nothing but a procession up and down the field, as they expressed it, with Arrowsmith “leading the grand march.” Just to humour the cunning of his toe, the Indian kicked two field goals and one goal from placement. Several times, when he punted, the ball cleared the varsity goal line. No wonder the two grads left the ball grounds enthusiastic about the red man.

“Most wonderful back I ever saw, bar none,” declared the ex-end rush.

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"Runs back kicks better'n Fultz of Brown," declared the ex-quarter-back.

"And bucks the line harder'n that Carlisle Indian—Pierce, wasn't it?"

"Yes'n he can drop-kick with Bernie Trafford of Harvard."

"Wouldn't you like to see him playing against Harvard for the old coll?"

"Wouldn't I," agreed the one-time All-America quarter-back.

There was a long silence that night after they had played the game over—the afternoon's contest and a game or two in which they had starred at college. All at once the ex-end rush jumped up so suddenly from the bed that he spilled the fire of his pipe and ignited the blanket. A pitcher of water extinguished the blaze. Then the fireman explained:

"I've got one great idea."

"Let me in on it," begged the ex-quarter.

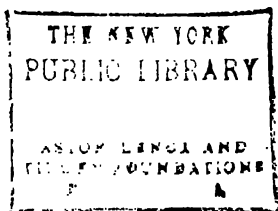
"S'pose we send Arrowsmith to college—to the old coll, just to show that we haven't forgotten 'em."

"To college! What you been packing in that pipe?"

"It's no dream—listen: Do you know why the old coll was founded?"



"I've got one great idea. S'pose we send Arrowsmith to college—to the old coll, just to show that we haven't forgotten 'em,"



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The former quarter-back pleaded guilty of ignorance.

"Thought not. It was founded to educate Indians!"

"Indians? Come off. There weren't any there when we were—leastways, not real Indians."

"I know—just 'white' Indians." The former end rush loaded his pipe. "But there were once on a time," he added, "nothing but Indians. Do you know—that's why they started the college, way back. But when the supply of Indians gave out—red men trekked West—they had to take whites or shut up shop."

"Aw, come off—where'd you get that?"

"Heard Prexie telling it to entertain my pater. Dad goes to Mohonk every year to save the Injun and get rid of his gout."

"But what's that got to do with Arrowsmith?" asked the practical man who had directed the team.

"Everything. The Indians left—and left behind the endowment. Boy, there's a slashing big fund, multiplying itself at compound interest, just waiting to educate Indians. True as you're smoking there."

"For scholarship—nothing else, I'll bet."

"Not on your daguerreotype! Schooling,

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board, room, laundry—probably even smoking tobacco. All we got to do is land Arrowsmith on the campus. The old coll does the rest. It's a cinch."

"Course you don't see any trouble ahead getting the Indian to join the enterprise?"

"No, I don't, Wisely Worldman. I know the Indian—collectively and by his lonesome—vain as a covey of peacocks. I'll paint him a swell picture of the Harvard Stadium, with row upon row of admiring dames and envious white men—and Arrowsmith the cynosure of every durn lamp. Will he rise to the bait? Watch him! I can see him now, in the buff-and-blue stockings of the old coll, streaking like an Indian legend for the Harvard goal line!"

But the one-time quarter-backlooked troubled. "You said, didn't you, we'd have to deliver him, charges paid, on the campus?"

"Sure."

"Well, I never heard of a railroad's giving credit—hanging up a ticket from here to the old coll."

The ex-end rush smiled indulgently. "All that figured out—almost. The other day had a fair offer for my double-barrelled hammerless."

"You wouldn't sell the shotgun your dad

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gave you when you managed to haul down your A. B.?"

"Yes, I would—to uplift the red man. The pater would approve of that."

The man who had given the signals bowed approval. After a moment he spoke: "I had a chance to get rid of the diamond ring my uncle left me in his will."

"That's different," opined the end rush of another era. "Some day you could turn it into a flashy engagement ring."

"Rot!" answered the ex-quarter-back. "If you can sell your gun, guess I can part with my sparkler."

"Done!—it's a bargain!"

Although he did not realize it, Arrowsmith was all but matriculated in the ancient and honourable institution of the East. The red man was to be restored to his own.

September of the following year, when college opened, the "Buff and Blue" proclaimed the

RETURN OF THE RED MAN

Not only was the most interesting member of the freshman class an Indian—the first to make his home on the campus in half a century—but the return of the red man to the institution

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originally founded for his sole benefit was indeed a remarkable event in the later history of the college. If inclined to be jocular, which the "Buff and Blue" was not, it might be referred to as a red-letter day in the career of the ancient seat of learning. But the occasion was too big for facetiousness.

Then followed a circumstantial account of the coming of John Wilson—for that was the name of the Indian.

He had arrived unheralded, bearing the certificate of a school on the Taos Reservation in New Mexico, a school whose standards were sufficiently high to admit Wilson into full standing in the freshman class of the college.

At first he had been loath to talk, but finally he had unleashed his tongue and told how two famous graduates of the college, star athletes in their day and now notably successful mining engineers at Albuquerque, had encouraged him to seek a collegiate training and had helped him to find the means to pay his way East. The father of one of the graduates had long been studying the Indian problem, which accounted, perhaps in part, for the son's unselfish interest.

Here, according to newspaper practice, was inserted a complimentary reference to the former end rush and to the one-time All-America

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quarter-back, with their athletic records and this tribute:

“Far from the college halls though they found themselves, their hearts beat with true and loving devotion for their alma mater, and they sought her welfare in mining camp as other graduates do in the great cities nearer the campus. It is such loyalty that insures the future of the college—in truth, the future of the race.”

Either the sophomore who wrote the story or the senior who edited it was sufficiently canny not to raise the question of the Indian's eligibility from an athletic standpoint.

“Whether John Wilson will try for any of the athletic teams,” concluded the story, “is a matter which he has not determined as yet. For the present his entire attention is concentrated on his college work. He is studious to a degree not often found in the red man.”

Professor Simeon Furness, head of the Greek department—“Zeus, Junior,” to the undergraduates—read this story over twice from two different angles. First, he read it from the standpoint of the anthropologist, interested in the physical facts concerning man. Second, and more carefully, he read it as the faculty member of the Athletic Council. It was the time o' year when “ringers” were put over on the unwatchful

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college authorities. It was the season of the most detestable of college sports—football.

After his Sabbatical year spent in Athens, Professor Furness had won the hearts of the alumni by his compelling address at the New York alumni banquet. He had pictured most vividly the finish of the Marathon runner, winner of the classic event; and following the enthusiasm aroused by his oratorical effort, had raised an unbelievable amount of money for the new athletic field. As a reward he was urged upon the president of the college for appointment as faculty member of the Athletic Council.

The Professor of Greek was duly appointed. Too late the student body awoke to the bitter truth that Zeus, Junior, was bitterly opposed to football. Track athletics, of course—"they were the modern Olympian games." Baseball, yes—for it "originated," he claimed, with the Greeks, "who played ball to gain grace and elasticity in the human figure." But football!—"that was from the barbarian world."

So Professor Furness did everything in his power to hamstring football. And the surest means to this end was to scrutinize material for the football eleven with the utmost care, rejecting every candidate who was found to have the slightest taint of professionalism.

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"When Furness gets through purifying the football squad," growled the head coach, "what's left won't be fit to play bean bag."

The faculty member of the Athletic Council was suspicious of John Wilson from the very first, probably because the Indian was a husky giant who looked as if he had swallowed and digested a football in early adolescence. On the second afternoon of the term Professor Furness strolled over to the athletic field and watched the practice. He hadn't been there long before the Indian appeared, wearing the football togs of the scrubs. The red man stood well over six feet. His weight was certainly two hundred or more, and yet his height, his broad shoulders—broader than his hips—his long, muscular, but not muscle-bound, legs took care of this "beef" and made it appear thirty pounds less. He loped rather than walked, and there was a surety about his gait and a decisiveness in every movement of his body that marked him as a fast man and a mighty ground gainer. Any football coach would have shed tears of joy at his first appearance for practice.

John Wilson did not have to wait, as many a freshman must, to attract the attention of Minds, the head coach. He secured immediate consideration.

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Minds asked him if he had ever played football. John Wilson shook his head. Then the head coach carefully placed the ball in the middle of the field, gave instructions how it should be kicked off, and kicked. The oval went about forty-five yards—a good, solid kick-off.

At once the Indian was given a chance. The ball was placed by the head coach as before, and John Wilson was signalled to kick. He loped up to the ball with an air of utter indifference, swung his right leg, landed on the ball with his toe, and kicked it—clean over the goal line. Fifty-five yards!

“Indian claims he never played football before,” remarked Minds to his assistant. “Ain’t my business, but if he hasn’t played football two years at least I’ll eat my old moleskins.”

“You bet,” agreed the assistant coach; “but don’t say a word to arouse suspicion. Don’t look now—Zeus Junior’s on the side line, eying the Injun as a cat does a canary.”

“Not a word from your Uncle Dudley. But say—with the line I have in prospect, and that Indian in the back field, I’ll beat Harvard sure as God made little pigs to cover footballs.”

Professor Furness did not overhear this conversation—it wasn’t necessary. It was sufficient

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that he saw and comprehended this pantomimic performance.

Later the professor of Greek arose in faculty meeting, rasped his throat to attract attention, and read a section of the eligibility rules, to wit: "No student shall be allowed to represent the college in any public athletic contest, either individually or as a member of any team, who receives from any source whatever a pecuniary gain, or emolument, or position of profit, direct or indirect, in order to render it possible for him to participate in college athletics."

Professor Furness reminded the president and professors that the college would not only remit the tuition of the Indian in their midst, but would provide him with room, pay his board, and presumably reimburse him for laundry charges, et cetera—and thus "render it possible for him to participate in college athletics!" If the college could educate and support this Indian, and still observe the eligibility rules, what was to prevent the hiring of a skilled athlete—"not by our institution," said Professor Furness, "but by some struggling college hungry for the advertising resultant from success on the athletic field."

Long discussion ensued, but the proposition advanced by the faculty member of the Athletic

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Council would not down. It was finally voted, on the president's suggestion, to debar John Wilson from all *intercollegiate* contests until the matter of his eligibility could be carefully considered and perhaps informally discussed with the athletic authorities of other institutions of learning—Harvard, for example.

The coaches and the undergrads were mad enough at Zeus, Junior, to mine the lawn of his residence and blow him over the moon. With the red man the college could beat Harvard; without him—defeat. And by faculty ukase John Wilson was relegated to the scrub—all because of a technicality. No wonder there was outcry everywhere against the courts!

Tris Ford had a cold, a very bad cold. He couldn't seem to shake it off, he said. And so the day after the baseball season closed—the Giant-killers were expected to "repeat," but didn't—the manager slipped out of town, telling no one remotely connected with the Fourth Estate where he was going.

The sporting writers of the city had concluded, with unanimity surprising in experts, that the championship was lost through the August batting slump. In a measure, Ford took this view of it; but he knew that the real weakness of his

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otherwise invincible machine was behind the bat. By July, Ira Landis, the club's first catcher, had recovered entirely from his gunshot wound, and was "as good as ever," the experts insisted. Tris Ford smiled at this. Landis was still a valuable backstop, but never again would he be the great catcher he had proved himself against the fleet-footed Cubs. His accident, and particularly the slow healing of the wound with the attendant favouring of the injured leg, had slowed Landis down. Never again would he be likened to the panther or any other agile creature supposed at all moments to be "up on his toes." But this was a secret shared by the manager with no one.

Then there was Rapp, who had starred behind the bat in the World's Series of a later year, cutting the daredevil Giants down at second as if they were anchored to the path. But here again luck was against the Fordmen. A foul tip had struck Rapp in the neck, causing a growth which necessitated an operation. From this resulted much pain, with continual annoyance, and while Rapp's arm was as sure and his catching as certain as ever, he had lost some of his ginger. He, too, was slowing down a bit, Ford perceived. This left only the third man of the string, Bates, secured from Baltimore. The manager had small

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hopes of making him a first-class catcher. He was slow to think—a fatal weakness in a backstop.

Tris Ford, although the ablest tactician in baseball, was at bottom a business man. Like the best merchants and manufacturers, he never failed to look ahead. He planned two, three, often four years in advance. And he went after the players.

This explains why Tris had such a very bad cold, and why he went away to an inn recommended as a quiet, comfortable place, with an exceedingly good table—all at a high point in Vermont, not far from White River Junction. He idled about for a couple of days, taking long walks and enjoying the crisp autumn air. On the third day, while buying a paper at the newsstand, he remarked to the boy in charge: "Isn't there a college up here somewhere?"

"Sure," replied the distributor of current literature, "not twenty miles from here. And, b'lieve me, they's got some football team this year."

"You don't tell me!" exclaimed Ford, opening his eyes wide in astonishment.

"They's an Indian—real Injun from the Wild West—who's the greatest half-back in the hul United States. But he's on the scrub," added the boy sadly.

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"On the scrub!" repeated Ford. "Won't they let him play?"

"Not so far—but the 'lumni are working hard to get 'em to let him play. Ef Harvard's willin', he'll play. And b'lieve me, he won't do a thing to the Crimson—he'll eat 'em up!"

"I'll run over and look the team over," remarked Ford. "Nothing else to do."

"You kin go there on the trolley in an hour," volunteered the boy.

Thus the manager of the Giant-killers went to the "old coll." But he went incog.

The next day a half-breed Indian who passed for a full blood, rather shabbily dressed, came to the inn, walked rapidly to the stairs as if he knew or had been told the way, and without trouble found a room on the second floor. His knock brought a cheery "Come in!" and he was closeted, as the press would say, with the most successful manager in organized baseball.

"Glad to see you," said Tris Ford, holding out his hand. "Have a chair."

The Indian sat down on the edge of the most uncomfortable chair and fidgeted with his cap.

"Let's start right," began Ford. "You answer now to the name of Wilson, don't you?" he asked with an amused smile.

The red man grunted; meaning yes.

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"But out in New Mexico," continued Tris, "you played ball under the name of John Smith. Isn't that right?"

The Indian stared sullenly at his inquisitor, who went ahead:

"Your father's name was Arrowsmith—an Englishman."

"Squaw man," said the Indian, somewhat bitterly.

"Your mother was a full-blooded Indian, wasn't she?"

Smith or Arrowsmith or Wilson nodded.

"You caught for the Deming Club."

The Indian entered no denial.

"For *money*," emphasized Ford, stopping short.

"Going tell?" asked the red man.

Tris Ford laughed. "My own business takes all of my time," he said. "Get out of your head that I'm here to give you away—tell on you. I'm not. And I don't want you to quit college—just yet."

The Indian, who had heard nothing but "professionalism" and "eligibility" since he came to college, appeared much relieved by the manager's attitude.

"Now, what's your game?" asked Ford pointedly.

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"Want beat Harbridge."

"You mean Har-vard at Cam-bridge," corrected Tris, suppressing a chuckle.

A smile from the red man—his first.

"And when you lick Harvard—what then?"

"Money—make money—baseball."

Tris Ford shook his head. "You stay right where you are and get some coaching for that gray matter of yours." He tapped his head. "Learn to think—to think quick. If that endowed brainery—the college—is any good, there must be some kind of practice to make a bright young fellow like you think—think quick."

Slowly, but not very decidedly, the Indian moved his head, betokening a glimmer of understanding.

"There's a study named calculus," continued Tris. "It's doing figuring with signs—sort of major-league arithmetic, I guess. You might take a swing at it."

The red man looked blank.

"If not that," said Ford, noting his suggestion was coldly received, "then something to improve your memory—something to help you learn the batters' weaknesses—and never forget 'em. History might do that—names and dates and what happened. Say—if you knew when Napoleon

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was retired at Waterloo and what put him out of the game, why—you would never forget what kind of ball fools Napoleon Lajoie—and strikes him out. See!”

The Indian grinned. History might have surprises in store for him, but nothing touching upon the careers of Napoleon Lajoie and Hans Wagner.

“And when you have learned to think—to think quick—I’ll give you something to think about. I’ll find you a position, coach you, and make a great catcher out of you.”

Hearty approval from the red man.

“You promise to sign with me?” demanded Ford.

The Indian grunted yes; then exacted his promise:

“And you no tell?”

“Not a thing, John—Wilson!”

As the red man went out Tris Ford gave him a parting order:

“Write me once in a while and tell me how you get along. Write if you want anything,” he added significantly.

“Me write,” said John Smith-Arrowsmith—Wilson.

In this manner—not forgetting Andy Yelliott’s tip—are great ball players “discovered.”

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It was a week before the Harvard game. Students and the young blood of the faculty thought of little else.

The fate of the redoubtable John Wilson was not overlooked—it could not be. Day after day, playing with the scrub, he tore the varsity line to tatters, scored touchdowns practically unaided, kicked goals from difficult angles, and caused Minds to blubber with joy one minute and curse Furness in bitter wrath the next. When transferred to the first team the Indian made the scrub look like the Lyme High School eleven. What wouldn't—rather *couldn't* he do to Fair Harvard! The faculty edict had not been revoked. The red man was not allowed to participate in contests with other colleges so far.

However, the alumni member of the Athletic Council—Hare, a former football captain—had gone to Cambridge, with the president's permission, to submit the question of the Indian's eligibility to the Harvard athletic authorities. When he returned he wore quite prominently a smile of acute complacency. But he refused to talk. He must first report to the faculty.

One glance at Hare's reassuring smile, and Minds ordered John Wilson to the back field of the varsity, and began to reel off formations with a zeal and decisiveness that indicated he

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had fixed on his final line-up. The undergrads on the side lines pulled off the snake dance. Harvard was beaten then and there.

Faculty meeting late that afternoon was held not entirely in secret. Hare was invited to be present; and with thorough assurance and unregenerate satisfaction he made his report.

In a nutshell: Harvard had no objection to the playing of the Indian on the varsity eleven, provided only that he was a regular member, in good standing, of the freshman class.

There was no cheer, of course, but one or two professors and several instructors clapped their hands timidly. The president smiled approval upon Hare, as much as to say: "Well done, good and faithful diplomat. We'll glory over this later."

Being so devoted to ancient Greece, the cradle of the drama, Professor Furness was not without histrionic genius. He smiled with the president, and permitted Hare's report to become *res adjudicata* before he got upon his feet. Even this he did with the air of the defeated one who rises to make it unanimous. He was silent a moment, as if embarrassed as to how to begin; then slowly drew from his pocket a letter.

"Before we determine this perplexing case, I have here a communication which I feel it my bounden duty to lay before you." The profes-

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sor of Greek paused and rasped his throat. "I took it upon myself, as the faculty member of the Athletic Council, to institute an investigation of this student's antecedents." Another pause, quite dramatic. It was noticeable that the satisfied expression on Mr. Hare's face was fading slightly. "I wrote to the school on the Taos Reservation, New Mexico, and asked about an *Indian* named John Wilson who had graduated there, giving the year designated in the certificate presented to us. The reply was"—a wearing pause while Professor Furness glanced from the worried Hare to the disturbed president—"the reply was that there had been—I read from the letter from the head of the school—'a fair-haired Scotchman by the name of John Wilson at the school, but never an Indian by that name.'"

Sensation among the faculty! Hare appeared crestfallen, Prexie unconcealedly disappointed, the professor of Greek blatantly triumphant.

Of course the masquerader was summoned before the president. Asked where and how he had obtained the certificate, he refused to answer. But when threatened with instant expulsion, and remembering Tris Ford's admonition that he remain in college until the following summer, he confessed and implicated the generous-hearted grads at Albuquerque.

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"Where did *they* get the certificate?" asked the president, amazed at such unethical procedure on the part of graduates of the college.

"From John Wilson—fifty dollar Mex.," replied the Indian.

The president found that, under a liberal construction of the gift in behalf of the Indians, John Arrowsmith (using his right name) must be received, sheltered, and provided with as much education as he could assimilate. But necessarily, having passed no entrance examinations and possessing, of his own right, no certificate of admission, he could no longer be looked upon or classified as a regular member in good standing of the freshman class; therefore was ineligible to participate in intercollegiate contests. He must not face Harvard.

After the Indian had quitted the presence of the "chief" of the institution of higher learning expressly founded for the benefit of the red man, he observed to the sore and disgusted head coach, speaking with an abandon most unusual in him:

"Prexie—he an old woman. Tris Ford—he a treeful of owls!"

The game with Harvard was an evenly matched but uneventful struggle. Neither team scored; which gave rise to many a variation of:

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"It might have been." The one high light was provided by Arrowsmith, "to an anthropologist most illuminating," as Professor Furness remarked. The scrub eleven had been taken along as a reward for playing doormat to the varsity. The Indian, in his brown canvas jacket and moleskins and his stockings and jersey of buff and blue, sat as impassive as a bronze statue until the Harvard squad appeared in the stadium.

They came upon the field wearing crimson stockings and jerseys and with bright crimson blankets fluttering from their shoulders. Arrowsmith gasped in childlike surprise, jumped to his feet, and let out a bloodcurdling yell. His teammates gaped at him in wonderment. Had he gone suddenly crazy or had he been partaking too liberally of fire water? Seeing their questioning expressions, the Indian, unabashed, explained:

"There *is* a college colour—red!"

As a people we palefaces habitually acquire calendars and hunt for the date line of newspapers when writing letters—all as though we counted the spurt of time by days and months. Not so. According to his occupation, each man fixes the rounds in the battle of life. Tris Ford, for instance, split up his season by the untoward

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events relating to his ball club, conspicuously the injury to his players.

In August following John Arrowsmith's year at college, Rapp, who was doing most of the catching for the Giant-killers, while at bat was hit by a vicious inshoot and his throwing arm broken. This meant, alas, that he was out for the rest of the season.

It was a staggering blow, a squélcher to the team's prospects. So far Landis had caught only two games. He was always "rounding into form," but never quite rounded. He put in his time schooling the young pitchers, and although Manager Ford kept it dark, he knew that Ira Landis was "through."

The Giant-killers were leading in the championship race by a scant four games. With nobody to do the "receiving" except the incapable Bates—really a minor leaguer—what hope was there of maintaining this slight advantage? And almost to a man the experts answered:

"About as much chance as St. Louis has to cop the pennant."

The accepted parlance is to speak of baseball as a game played on a diamond. In matter of diagram, it is played on a fan-shaped field. At the "handle" of this fan stands the catcher—the one man of the team in the field who faces

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the game. To the catcher travels the ball from pitcher—from the catcher radiates the game. The catcher is the keystone of the defence. And Rapp's injury had left the team without a first-class catcher. Who could say that the experts had exaggerated the catastrophe which had befallen the Giant-killers?

Two days later, in the opening game of the series with the Red Sox, the official announcer informed the curious crowd that the battery for the home team would be "D-a-r-t and A-r-r-o-w."

And an Indian, magnificent specimen of his race, put on the mask and went behind the bat.

Again Tris Ford—"a treeful of owls"—had put one over on the experts. Frankly and in good part the sporting writers acknowledged this. For Arrow caught a wonderful game. No passed balls, no dropped third strikes, although Bill Dart used his demoniacal speed. Not a man lost at second. And as for quick thinking! Read this from the account in the *Public Scroll*:

"All doubt as to the redskin's gray matter was obliterated by a dazzling play never before seen on the home lot, if in any ball yard. Shrady on third, the fleet Cooper on first, and Yerger at bat. On the third strike, which the Indian captures,

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Cooper sprints for second and Shradly starts a dash as if to come home. Arrow, quicker than lubricated lightning, makes a bluff to throw to third, driving Shradly back on the slide, and in the same motion the red man whips the horsehide to second, getting Cooper by an eyelash wink. Can you beat it? Not without rifle and ball. The Injun will do—do very nicely—thank you, Tris! And the Giant-killers will win the championship, bless their hard hearts.”

One or two inquisitive sporting editors questioned whence had come the red man. Not off the “farm,” of course, but fresh as paint from the reservation! It was hinted that the Indian’s prowess was the by-product of higher education. “As he is not known at Carlisle,” wrote the *North Star*, “John Arrow must have attended the Painted Post Polytechnic.”

But in the little barber shop, chair by chair, Tris Ford and Andy Yelliott were congratulating each other.

At the same hour, hidden away in a boarding-house, lounged the mighty catcher. Strewn about him were the papers in which his picture crowded the news of the day into the background. He was cartooned in feathered headdress and with a tomahawk, chasing the frightened Bostonese out of town. He was given a sonorous

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name that was sure to stick—"The Chief." But to all this acclaim he seemed utterly oblivious.

His mind was on other and more obvious things. He thought with deepest regret of the sombre brown stockings and trimmings of the uniform he was destined to wear until he was traded, sold, or released. And in his child of nature's heart he wished that Tris Ford was manager of the Red Sox!

As this story had two beginnings, it also has two endings. About the time John Arrow of the Giant-killers was ruminating upon the charm of red over brown in socks and trimmings, two early rising mining engineers were chinning together at Albuquerque as they smoked their pipes.

Remarked one who had been rated the All-America quarter-back of his senior year:

"Don't suppose you could lend me a hundred? Want to buy a solitaire."

Promptly and decidedly the former end rush made answer:

"Not if you were to engage yourself to Carnegie's daughter and could get married and realize on your investment to-morrow."

Somewhat irrelevantly the ex-quarter-back then observed:

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"I guess folks are right—the only good Injun's a dead Injun."

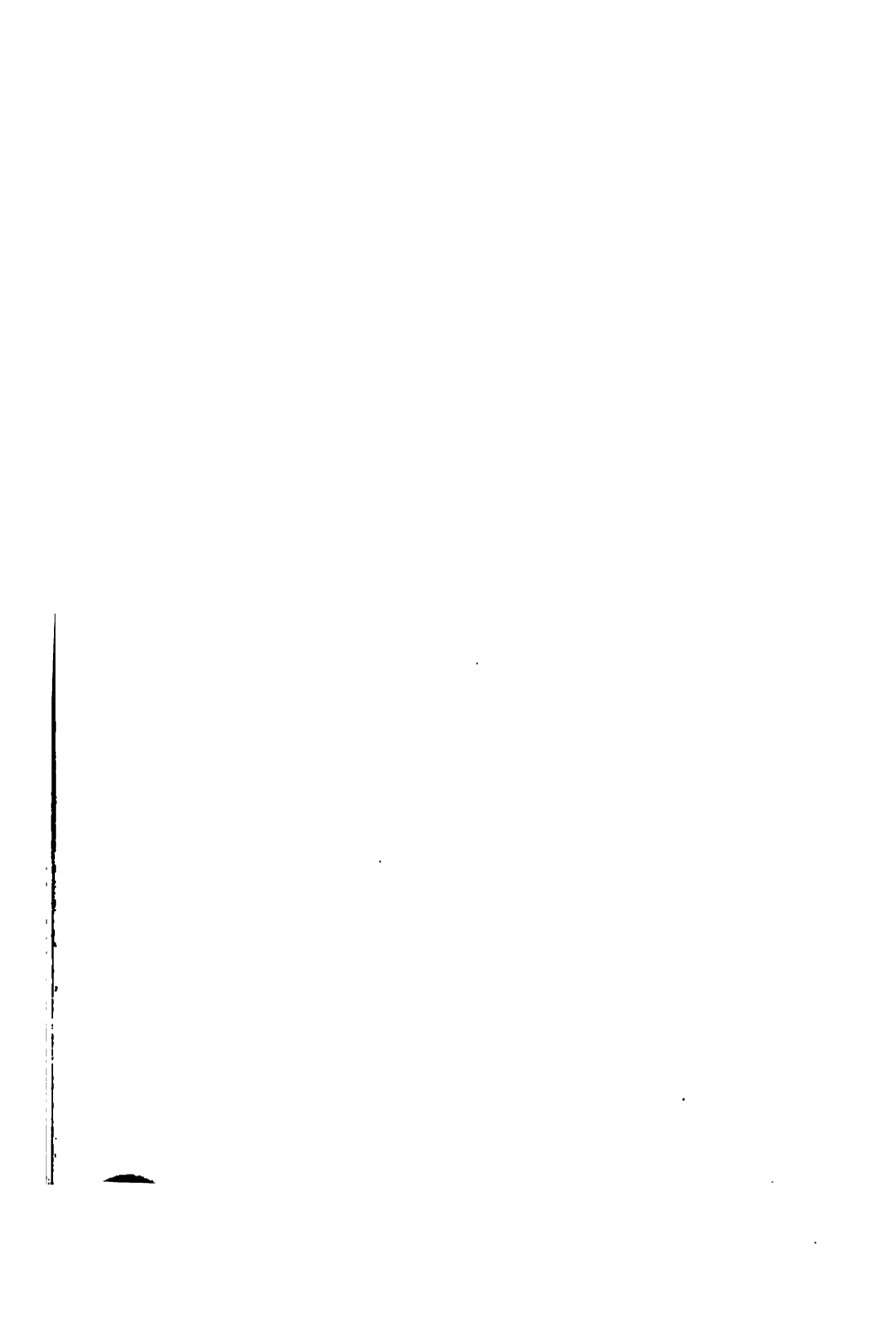
And the ex-end rush put the capper on:

"We got a dead one, all right, all right."

But elsewhere in New Mexico they knew better. Already money was being raised to paint and elevate a sign near the tracks of the transcontinental, that he who travelled that way might read:

THIS IS DEMING
WE RAISE
WHEAT, ALFALFA, CATTLE, SHEEP
AND
BALL PLAYERS
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT
ASK
TRIS FORD
OF THE
CHAMPION GIANT-KILLERS
THIS IS THE HOME OF "CHIEF" ARROW

RELEASING THE FILM PRINCESS



RELEASING THE FILM PRINCESS

IN MAJOR league baseball, which is war, one hears mostly of the big battles, sometimes of the fierce skirmishes, also of the manoeuvres for advantage in the decisive engagements or "crucial series." But very little, save when the stove league season is on, of the painstaking, often discouraging, scientific building of the war machine; that is, the perfectly balanced ball club. Going back a bit——

"Sox" Reybold, sometime celebrated in prose and doggerel as the "Fence-Breaker," was slowing down, but slowing down craftily. He was fooling the bleachers with his occasional long hits. He was stalling off the baseball writers with his batting average. But he wasn't pulling the shoddy over Tris Ford's all-seeing eyes. Nothing got by this manager, who sat in the dugout normally reposeful, but when the club "looked awful bad" destroyed the reporters' favourite figure—"impassive as Buddha"—by fidgeting with his score-card; cubs called it signalling.

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Yea, retrograding regular, verily, over-touted recruit, Tris Ford sat, saw and comprehended, as this reduces to demonstration:

Score tied, and Reybold played a two-base hit badly, letting it go for the circuit. Home club behind. Score tied later, and Reybold didn't start quick enough to capture a line drive for the third out—merely stopped the ball's wild flight, allowing the man on second to cross the plate. Club again trailing. In the ninth, with a man on, to the hilarity of stands and bleachers Reybold hit a home run. No hilarity visible on Tris Ford's countenance.

"Won it for you—eh, Tris?" boasted Reybold after the pastime.

"You've got another guess coming, haven't you, Sox?"

"Aren't you never satisfied these days?" grumbled the vet centre-fielder and "clean-up" man.

"You won one game all right, but you lost two this afternoon! You still owe me a game, Sox."

And Tris Ford, smiling just enough to relieve the tension, climbed the winding stairs to his private room—the "war office."

Next game, although this was a series with the league leaders and the home papers insisted the club had a fighting chance, Reybold was not

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in the line-up. "Touch o' rheumatism," was the explanation from the war office. A bush-leaguer named Olds—yes, "Rabbit" Olds who came to be the fleet left-fielder of the Giant-killers!—was tried in centre; and Danny O'Brien was moved up to Number 4 in the batting order—clean-up man. Danny failed to deliver the punch in the pinch, and Olds misjudged a screeching liner, three runs scoring. Wherefore, one of the scribes, a newcomer in the press corral, took it upon his stoop-shoulders to call down the manager.

"Why'd you play that busher in such an important series? Want to toss the game away?"

Tris Ford turned the colour of a ball fresh from the tinfoil. But as habitual he held on to himself.

"Your job, young man, is to criticise ball games at this park, ain't it?"

The fledgling sporting writer, sensing what was coming to him, let his jaw drop upon his checked stock.

"Well, then, do what you're paid for; don't try to throw your work off on me!"

One might have expected this minor-league baseball writer, safe at his typewriter, to wipe up the sporting page with Reuben Olds, and throw the harpoon into *Tristram Carlingford*.

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Nothing of the sort. He hammered out a colourless account of the game, and then asked the city editor for a transfer. He was assigned to police court work, ultimately tried his typewriter at cinema plays, and wrote that widely popular three-reel feature, "Winning His Way." But this is a long way ahead of schedule.

We are concerned, just now, with Tris Ford's titanic undertaking of building a new machine out of super-raw material. Contemporaneously, bucking the critics of the press, and holding the patronage of disgruntled fans. Much job!

There was, among six other tough problems, the widening hole at third base. "Monte" Voss, whose reputation had been that of the deepest-playing third-sacker in either league, was letting balls flash by him which he would have eaten up in the halcyon days. And there was Number 4 on the batting list, which demanded a sticker with the punch—a punctual clean-up man. As scarce an article as presidential timber in a board of aldermen.

But no problem ever stumped Tris Ford. He ate 'em alive! Ask him what he'd have for dinner, and he'd tell you a tough underdone problem with the bone left in, and a little food on the side. With his appetite and aptitude for problems, he set heartily to work, but stealthily, of course,

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to plug up the aperture at third, and to send to bat, fourth man up, a wielder of the warclub who would strike terror to opposing pitchers.

He found the larruping laddie with Reading of the Tri-State. His name was Frank Holt—yes, “Home-Run” Holt he was destined to be; but for the love of romance, wait till the last man is out! Holt was guarding the bunt pasture acceptably, and batting like the seventh son of Jim Delehanty. So the problem at third and the call for a clean-up hitter were solved at one fell trade—perhaps.

Born on a farm near Gettysburg, and hardened by the chore and harvest-hand treatment, Frank Holt had taken to college a whip like a steel cable, and, thanks to habits of the best, an eye as keen as ever outguessed a pitcher in the 20-yard duel. At once he demonstrated that he was a natural hitter; and in his second year lowly Gettysburg College beat mighty U. of P., all account of Holt’s slugging.

In vacations he played with a semi-pro team, having figured out a substantial profit for college expenses from his baseball wage over and above the hire of a hand to take his place on the farm. At graduation he was snapped up by Reading.

Tris Ford, who had no conscience in a baseball deal, gave a curveless wonder, an outfielder who

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made circus-catches but couldn't bat against a southpaw, and a hitless infielder for Frank Holt, agreeing to let the youngster finish out the Tri-State season. By this gorgeous trade Tris Ford made it truthful to say in future that his hundred-thousand-dollar infield hadn't cost him a nickel.

Wherein Tris failed in the matter was to learn of the recruit's week-end habit. In his college days Frank Holt walked to the campus in the morning and back to the farm, bunking at home and attending to his chores. Invariably he spent his Sundays on the farm when a member of the semi-pros. And his contract with Reading expressly stipulated that he was to be allowed to go home after Saturday's game, or before if it rained.

His contract with Ford's club, of course, contained no such provision. He didn't ask for it, for going home each week, he knew, was not possible. He was, as a matter of fact, so excited about breaking into the majors that he didn't give week-ends a thought when he signed up.

That year Ford's club, for the first time in its history, finished in the second division. The manager knew that he, too, must deliver the baseball goods next season if the attendance was to be kept from drifting away to the rival ball yard.

In the South the following spring, the "war

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correspondents" began sending home glowing accounts of the Yannigans, who were showing up the regulars day after day in the practice games. Excessively uncommunicative by nature, Tris Ford, on the journey North, gave column interviews about his "sweet" youngsters—the cleverest lot he had ever handled—and hinted broadly at coming changes in the regular line-up. Thus he inoculated the home fans with a keen anticipation—a longing that would grease the turnstiles at the park.

To make good his promises, he put on the field, the opening game, a team composed of four vets, a former substitute, and four youngsters. The infield was rebuilt from John McCarthy (yes, "Stuffy!") on the initial sack to Frank Holt at the far corner of the diamond. Starr, sub outfielder, replaced Reybold in centre. Olds was in left. And a youngster was assigned to bat Number 4. Holt was clean-up man!

The "Guy from Gettysburg" did exceedingly well in the early games. But this didn't mean much, because opposing pitchers—the older stars especially—hadn't rounded into form, or were not going to the mound as yet. "The fence-buster of May is the bench-warmer of August," was one of Tris Ford's favourite saws. So he wasn't crowing—merely "pulling." All he

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said to the clouting recruit was, "Keep a-swinging at 'em."

Toward the wind-up of the first trip West, Holt, who had lost his cheerful smile and appeared depressed, fell off in his batting. The slump lasted through the White Sox series, and was manifest when the outpost of the league circuit was reached. Pitilessly, one of the war correspondents wired his paper:

"If the stars in their courses and destiny writ in the box-scores do not lie, Frank Holt, the Gettysburg pummeler, is girding up his loins to blow. I predict that 'Old Reliable' Reybold will be back on the skirmish line, cleaning up the base paths, before our next sunset jaunt."

On the long jump East the youngster screwed up his courage to ask leave to stop off a night at home. Gladly his request was granted, and he left the squad with a happier face than when he broke into the big league. Tris Ford made mental note of the barometric change.

For a week after his return to the club Frank Holt gave the lie to those who had predicted his canning. He dealt blows with his trusty bludgeon that shattered the opposing defence. The lad sure was there with the punch. Alone in the war office Tris Ford allowed himself one muffled sigh of relief.

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But in the second week of the Eastern sojourn the gladsome expression faded from the boyish face of the recruit, and once more his batting average slumped. "Headed again for the whiffing honours of the Cellar Champs," wrote the scribe who couldn't "see" Frank Holt.

Smiling and complacent in public, Tris Ford was none the less nearer despair than at any time in his managerial career. He sacrificed precious hours needed for recuperative sleep in a futile attempt to fathom Frank Holt's reversals of form. He was positive that the youngster was a quiet, sensible boy, with no bad habits. It wasn't a case of the lad's not taking care of himself—"there ain't nothing to that," Tris commented out loud to his wife, who was sleeping soundly. No, Frank Holt's trouble wasn't physical. It lay deeper than that. And it was the manager's job to get to its root—and root it out.

The tailenders finished out the third week. On Friday Manager Ford told Voss that he was to get back in the game Saturday, covering third, and Tris brought joy to Reybold by ordering him into centre, and Number 4 in the batting. "See if you've still got that batting eye, Sox," grinned Ford. But before giving these orders he had suggested a holiday to Frank Holt.

"Been tipped off to a young player up your

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way, Frank. Guess I'll have a look at him tomorrow. Want to keep me comp'ny?" Tris smiled hospitably.

"Where—to Gettysburg?—home!" There was a break in the youngster's voice which didn't escape the manager's notice.

"Sure, to Gettysburg. Like to come along?"

Frank Holt nodded, and turned his head away. Natural slugger—yes, but it was his first year out in the don't-care world.

At Gettysburg, Saturday morning, there was a telegram waiting for Tris Ford (sent by his stenographer!), which pretended that the touted player had sprung a Charley horse and couldn't exhibit himself. So of course Frank Holt's boss was invited out to the farm and of course accepted. Arrived at the Holts', in less than ten minutes Tris Ford understood that batting slump. He explained it to his wife afterward in very few words:

"I s'pose when you're an idol—why, you miss that idolizing. Frank gets homesick; there ain't nothing to that."

"Pa" and "Ma" Holt, great-hearted folk, thought the summer sun rose and set on their eldest. Two sisters—Sarah, prim yet tender as a little gray nun, and hazel-eyed Cora, the vivacious—made no secret of their ardent belief that

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Frank was every inch a hero And Will, a boy of sixteen, worshipped his big brother.

It was on Tris Ford's tongue to say to the youngest, "When'll you be ready to report to us?" But ever cautious and tactful, Tris looked him over first and saw—his withered arm. The young brother could never play ball; never do a man's work with his hands. His future depended on his head—on his education and training.

To Sunday dinner, blushing and looking very pretty in her dainty white frock, came Margery Cushing, Cora's best friend.

An artist visiting in town, admiring Margery, had once remarked that she reminded him of the "Parson's Daughter."

"Can't hold a candle to her—our minister's daughter can't!" Cora had exclaimed.

"I referred to Romney," the artist had explained condescendingly.

"No parson by that name in Gettysburg," had been Cora's rejoinder.

Anyhow, if you are familiar with Romney's picture, you are not far wrong in your conception of Margery. She deserved the artist's admiration.

"Known each other long?" asked Tris, watching Frank and Margery going off for a stroll after dinner.

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"Since they began to talk," laughed Cora.

"I see—grown up together."

"Hardly separated till Frank went to Reading."

"Engaged?"

"N-not exactly. Probably an understanding."

"Be getting married now, Frank's doing so well?" (Tris Ford was all for matrimony: it steadied the boys.)

"Oh, not for years, I'm sure."

"Ain't he making enough?"

Cora was in distress—afraid she had intimated that Frank's employer wasn't paying her brother a fair wage. Heavens! "Oh, a-plenty, Mr. Ford—more'n we ever dreamt of. But—there's Will.

"You see—Frank worked his way through college, first tending furnaces, then playing ball with the semi-pros. But Will——" She hesitated.

Tris nodded sympathetically.

"Will's awfully bright," she continued. "Frank says he's the brains of the fam'ly. Frank's going to send him through college and then to law school. And he's going to send Sarah to the Gettysburg Female Seminary, so she can teach, and have me trained in stenography and type-writing. Isn't he the best brother?"

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"Fine boy—Frank," agreed Tris.

Having diagnosed the trouble, Manager Ford worked out the cure on the train back to the city. He contracted to look after the youngster on the road, and he did, taking Frank to the theatre, or having him up in his room after dinner at the hotel. But when the club played at home it was Mrs. Ford's job. To her was allotted the delicate task of not letting Frank Holt get homesick, and slump in his hitting. Her ministrations, necessarily, were artfully veiled.

First, Sarah was induced to make a visit to the Ford home—to return the visit Tris had made at the farm! Later came Cora, and while she was there, Margery was invited to the city for Saturday's game and to spend Sunday. At other times—at least once a fortnight—Frank was sent home for the week-end. Frequently he was summoned to the Fords' to dinner, or to while away the evening. At least once a week he went to the movies with Mrs. Ford, Tris being busy with his nation-wide correspondence—acknowledging tips on phenoms.

By this skilful treatment Frank Holt, unknown to himself, was gradually cured of his homesickness. He grew more and more contented. On the ball field his mind seldom wandered from the game, hence his playing con-

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stantly improved. He completed the season with a batting average of .287—mighty good for a player in his first major-league season.

Before he dug out for Gettysburg, Frank Holt was asked if a boost of three hundred dollars would satisfy him for next year.

"Twenty-five hundred? 'Course it will."

"Well, I'll add to that two hundred more," said Tris, "thinking how you might use the money to bring Cora here during the season, to live at your boarding-house and study stenography. Is it a go?"

"Bet-cher life!"

Tris Ford was taking no chances with the demon homesickness. Next season he intended to set sail for another pennant.

The *Official Baseball Guide* tells you that Frank Holt batted .310 his second season, .324 his third, .319 his fourth, .348 his fifth, and .371 his sixth year in the majors. For the last three years in succession he led the league in home runs. But the *Guide* doesn't tell you that, concurrently with this five-year swatfest, he paid his brother's way through college, and helped Will to gain his bachelor of laws degree; that he provided for Sarah's higher education and for Cora's thorough training in stenography and

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typewriting. Neither does the statistical indicator tell how, being one of the World's Champions, and known the country over as "Home-run" Holt, Frank was able to obtain for Sarah an excellent teaching position in Harrisburg, and to place Cora in the State Agriculturist's office at the State capital, so the two sisters could room together and be company for each other; nor how he found Will a nice berth in the District Attorney's office at Gettysburg, so he could look after the home folks. All this Frank Holt did by delivering the punch with his resilient 40-ounce white ash.

But helping others he lost sight of self. Forgetting self, he did not give thought enough to Margery Cushing's best welfare. She was comfortable at home, and appreciating her lover's obligations, she had never thought to protest, though she was set apart in the community as "Frank Holt's best girl."

Every time the World's Champion went home—which wasn't so frequent in the baseball season as in the early days—he divided his visit between his father's house and the Cushings'. There was no engagement still, but the "understanding" was supposed by every one to exist. Six years back, in the first flush of drawing a man's pay, the thought had come to Frank that

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he had income sufficient to marry on. But he had thrust the idea from him because of his duty to his crippled brother and to his devoted sisters. His own particular happiness he put in the background. He was forced to wait, and so became used to it. "Home-run" Holt, always inclined to hit 'em out, in the game of life was all too good a waiter!

His seventh season in the big league he was to receive six thousand salary. He had participated in two World's Series, and the money—about seven thousand dollars—was salted away in a fine 6 per cent. investment. He had paid off the small mortgage on his father's farm, and had improved the house, to make easier his mother's "job," which she stoutly declined to relinquish to a hired girl. His brother and sisters were not only well equipped to make their own way in life, but were secure in positions that promised them a satisfactory living, with a chance to save. His responsibilities, save to the club, were lifted from his shoulders. He was free!

What was he to do with this new-found freedom? Strange, he didn't think of marrying Margery. Perhaps he did, but it meant "settling down," and for the first time in his steady-going, hard-working, never-care-free, thrifty life he felt

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restless. He didn't want to be tied down—not quite yet.

Whenever he took his position at the plate, he had a habit of lifting his bat high above his head and stretching out the kinks in his arm and shoulder muscles. It was his reaching for muscular freedom. Something akin to this possessed him—not in a physical but in a temperamental sense. He was free, and he longed to try his pinions. He didn't realize it—he wanted a fling!

II

Tris Ford was taking his last meal at home before the final invasion of the West. His good wife, hovering about and coaxing him to eat, without prelude or explanation remarked:

“Frank Holt's gone daft over that girl.”

“What girl? What d'yeh mean?” anxiously.

“Didn't you take notice at to-day's game?”

“Noticed we copped the odd from Washington, beating the 'Terrible Swede' for the second time in the series, and go West a game and a half in the lead.” Tris smiled in mild satisfaction.

“'Course you couldn't notice,” continued Molly, ignoring his reply altogether. “It was all over your head.”

“Say, old lady, what you giving me? I don't get you.”

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And Molly told him.

It had happened in the last half of the eighth, with the score 1 to 0 in Washington's favour, when it was do or perish for the Giant-killers because the heavy artillery was up for the last attack. Both Ryan and Olds were then retired on strikes. But Win Shute, moving about at the plate like a man on a red-hot stove, managed to work the speed wonder for a pass to first. This brought Frank Holt up. Instantly stands and bleachers resolved themselves into one huge prayer meeting.

"F-r-a-n-k! Hit 'er out, old b-boy—hit 'er out, fer the love o'——" was the frenzied cry.

Frank hadn't been hitting 'em out lately—not whiffing, you understand, but failing to "put 'em where they ain't." For the first time in five years his batting was below .300. However, unlike the model for this acute situation, one Casey, Holt rose to the occasion, and the ball, rebounding from his mighty bat, rose over the fence in left field! You can describe the subsequent applause as you like and not go wrong.

As the hero of the ash walked toward the bench, after scoring the run which shoved the Giant-killers into the lead, a girl with hair the colour of corn-silk flying from under her disarranged *chic* toque, and big, soulful eyes glowing,

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leaned forward in the front row of the upper pavilion over the home dugout—a moving picture of prettiness, no one could deny—and before all the crowd threw Frank Holt a kiss!

Not one of those artfully concealed, quick one-hand tosses—something like the first relay of a double-play at second—but done in the best manner of a soubrette who, in answer to a noisy curtain-call, uses both her hands to propel her lips' offering to its intended target. You may be sure that the cheering was renewed instantaneously with unrestrained delight.

“Probably some dame who goes in for *matinée* idols,” commented Tris Ford when his wife had concluded. “What of it?”

“What of it?” Molly looked down at her husband as superciliously as if he had been the clerk at the hosiery counter, instead of the brainiest man in baseball. “What of it?” she repeated to prolong the agony. “That girl's Lydia Lennox, the ‘Film Princess,’ ‘Queen of the Movies,’ and Frank Holt's lost his head over her—I *know*.”

“*How* d'yeh know?”

“Say, Tris, you've got a bright ball club—nothing escapes them. But nothing gets by their wives, neither. They've seen this affair budding for quite some while.”

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"Why wasn't I told before?" demanded Tris.

"Because you had troubles enough with your pitchers and bunged-up catchers; but now I reckon you'll have to take a hand."

"Reckon I will. Give me a line on the girl."

The motion-picture play, "Winning His Way," made a pot of money for its producers. The writer of this photoplay, a newspaper man doing "police," got \$75 in cash for his brain work, and a permanent job in the scenario department of the Kaycleft Company. Also revenge on a person who one time spoke sarcastically to him—name, Tris Ford. But this the ex-reporter knew nothing of.

"Winning His Way" owed its phenomenal success, first of all, to that homely appeal which oozes from the perennials of the speaking stage such as "The Old Homestead," "Shore Acres," and "Way Down East." It was the old, moss-covered story of the country lad who ventures to the Great Wicked City in search of fortune, and of the snares and pitfalls into which he blindly stumbles, only to extricate himself and outwit his cunning enemies. You know the formula.

Heart-interest was liberally contributed by a beautiful girl who, likewise, was set upon by deceitful wretches. Our hero had been warned by

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the home-folks of the wolverine wearing the imitation baby-lamb coat. But seeing this maiden in distress, he didn't hesitate the fraction of a second. Falling upon the kidnappers (or worse), he put them to flight. Heart-of-oak recognized an angel when he met her face to face!

In the last feet of the third reel, the country lad, having gained his great fortune, which opens to him, as it did to the Count of Monte Cristo, the drawing-rooms of the polite world, turns to the angelic maid, now slaving in a department store, and with the deference he would have shown a queen, takes her as his bride to the mansion prepared for her reception, and which is located, of course, in the most exclusive section of the Great City, once wicked, but now hospitable!

Sharing the honours of this production, indeed equally responsible, with the story, for the popularity of the "feature," was the leading lady of the cast—Lydia Lennox. In real life she was a girl off the streets, who had been picked up to give local colour to an outdoor scene in another picture play. Her striking looks, her quickness to obey commands of the "stage manager," and her aptness at interpretation brought her to the attention of the producing director, and she was hired permanently. First used in small parts,

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she was given her big chance in "Winning His Way"—and "ran away with the show." She did look the angel with her wavy hair the colour of corn-silk, full-lipped mouth drooping no more than enough to win compassion, and large baby eyes ranging in expression from "divine" to "dangerous."

Came a time when her face was as familiar to cinema-goers as Mary Pickford's or even John Bunny's. Whenever certain films were shown—films having in one corner a disjointed "K," meaning Kaycleft, the maker—Lydia Lennox appeared in the cast, and always as the heroine. She was at home as the multi-millionaire's daughter determined to marry the poor man of her choice. She was perfectly at ease as the fearless cowgirl in a Western melodrama, and would vault into the saddle and ride like a mad Cossack. In everything she played havoc with her soulful eyes.

Among her early victims was Frank Holt. He was present at the release of "Winning His Way." A country boy himself, with a fellow feeling for the farm lad who had to make his way alone in the big city, Frank naturally responded to the appeal of this homely photoplay. But the appeal that touched him most was made by the heroine. Thenceforth he looked eagerly

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for the name of Lydia Lennox in every cast, and his youthful heart beat more rapidly upon reading that she was to make her appearance in the picture play. Keeping the secret to himself, he began to regard Lydia Lennox, first, as a standard of feminine attractiveness, and then as an indefinable ideal. And he watched her advance in her profession with a mixture of gratification and jealousy—jealousy because he had to share her with the world. Of course you understand that up to this point it was worship from afar.

Her rise to fame was contemporary with his. When he was heralded far and near as “Home-run” Holt of the World Champions, Lydia Lennox was acclaimed the Film Princess, the Cinema Star, and Queen of the Movies.

Then occurred the meeting—a chance meeting. It was the season after the Giant-killers earned their favourite title at Manhattan’s expense. It was the year Frank Holt, freed of home responsibilities, was restless to try his wings.

You have seen from the grandstand or bleachers, if ever you were a spectator at the Giant-killers’ park, the immense Eastern plant of the Kaycleft Company. It looms large and mysterious a little out of the beaten tracks to the ball grounds, and about four blocks from the enclos-

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ure. One afternoon when the game had been called off because of wet grounds, though the sun had come out bright, Frank Holt went off by himself for a stroll. Curiosity, or a spirit of adventure, led him in the direction of the Kay-cleft plant; surely adventure opened the "stage" door, and out popped—Lydia Lennox!

Frank recognized her instantly, and showed it in his unconcealed glance of admiration. Her soulful eyes were not lowered modestly, as in "Winning His Way"—they looked boldly at Frank, for she had seen Home-run Holt's picture too often not to recognize the batting king. Neither did the lips of Lydia Lennox droop half in fear, half in pleading consideration, as in her first success. Those lips gave way to a smile—well, of invitation.

What followed provided the players' wives with subject-matter for at least one half of their time. As the Giant-killers, man for man, were regarded as the cleanest, best-mannered bunch of players in organized baseball, so, naturally enough, their wives and sweethearts were bright, well-educated, attractive young women, proud of the respect they commanded everywhere they went. No, they were not tolerant of the slightest waywardness in their sex, so they fell upon Lydia Lennox *en masse*, and tore her film from

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film. She didn't have much of that essential garment, character, to begin with, and what they left wasn't enough to protect her at a masque ball. Invariably the engagement ended with a broadside on this order:

"And to think a nice boy like Frank Holt would run around with a creature such as her! Augh!"

Things were framing up for a rupture in the camp of the World's Champions.

The Western trip was neither successful nor disastrous. The Giant-killers returned home leading by a fraction of a game. Right at their heels were the Red Sox and Washington, snapping and snarling like hungry wolves.

At such a crisis everything depends on the morale of the club. Consider the margin of difference between two evenly matched teams in a game—a timely hit, a costly error, a single run tips the beam; next day the hot struggle repeated, with some unexpected turn in the tide of victory. At this exciting stage of the race, other things being equal, it is physical condition and courage that determine the outcome.

Nerves on edge, tempers frazzled, belief growing that they weren't getting "the breaks"—these unhappy handicaps reduced the Giant-

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killers to a critical state in which to defend their slight advantage. Right here the Holt-Lennox affair was calculated to make the greatest possible sum total of trouble.

Every day Lydia Lennox was at the game. Regularly she sat over the home bench—as near as she could get to Frank Holt's position. In any delay of the contest he could glance up at her, as he did, for a nod of recognition. And when he walked to the dugout he was sure to be rewarded with some sign of their intimacy.

This "wireless" love-making did not escape the attention of the players' wives, who sat massed back of first in the upper pavilion. Every "little movement" of the Film Princess had one meaning, and only one, to the lady Giant-killers—"hypnotizing Frank." To which was most often appended: "The hussy!"

If an accurate picture has been presented of Frank Holt, you know him as a thrifty young man. Such was his reputation in the squad. Therefore there was manifest amazement when he sprung on the gang a low-hung motor car, painted a bright yellow, which had the noisy exhaust of a "speed-boat." This was the next stage.

Lydia Lennox, whose professional duties required the coöperation of Old Sol, was free to do

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what pleased her fancy every evening—usually at leisure before the start of the afternoon game. But if not, she came late, greeting her man at third unblushingly; and it was her custom to wait in the yellow racer after the game until Frank appeared in his street clothes. Then off they went, no one knew where; but there were plenty of guesses.

These motor trips brought scandal. One Sunday about twilight the car met with an accident. It collided with the buggy in which a young farmer was taking his best girl for a ride. The rickety conveyance was smashed to bits, but luckily both of the occupants escaped with slight scratches. However, the farmer claimed at once that the motor car was running at terrific speed, and the constable of the small town, in whose outskirts the accident happened, was inclined to take the same view. He put Frank under arrest, and started him off for the house of the justice of the peace.

It came into Frank Holt's frugal mind that if he were to disclose his identity, being as how he was one of the World's Champions, it might get him off. Thus he gave his own name. And the justice of the peace proved to be a fan—a rooter for the Giant-killers!

A settlement out of court was therefore made

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with little difficulty, the basis of which was Frank's promise to buy the farmer a buggy "just as good." Everything was going lovely.

Alas and alack! Cranking his engine, Frank discovered that he had put his car out of the running in the accident. Here's where all the noise emanated from. The location was five miles from the railroad, and anyhow the next train didn't leave till six in the morning! And it was more than 200 miles from the Giant-killers' park!

The justice of the peace seized it as the opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to entertain Home-run Holt. Also his——

Who was the lady?

Frank saw what was coming, and excusing himself for a moment he held a whispered conversation with the Film Princess. They couldn't get away till morning; they would have to accept the hospitality of the fan, but how? Reputation was at stake.

Lydia Lennox found the only possible solution. "Tell him we're to be married—nobody'll get wise in the city!" And Frank Holt did. Moreover, he introduced his fiancée as Miss Lennox. Before the evening passed the daughter of the house, as crazy over the movies as her father was over baseball, had guessed that they were—

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entertaining none other than the Queen of the Movies!

Consoling themselves that they could keep the escapade quiet, Frank Holt and Lydia Lennox recked not with the ramifications of the press. The *Public Scroll* and the *North Star* both had correspondents at this wayside town. There were handy cameras, too. Naturally the injured car, with Frank Holt at the wheel and beside him his intended wife—Lydia Lennox—were photographed, 'supposedly for a home souvenir. The prints were promptly mailed to the city, and reproduced, with a full and complete story, in both papers.

"Seven o'clock at night—over two hundred miles away—how were they to get home till next day?" asked the players' wives, and answered: "They never intended to!" Which took from her the last shred of the Cinema Star's character and left her what she was when picked off the streets by the Kaycleft Company. Women are unerring.

Tris Ford talked to Frank Holt like a father—and moved him not one whit. Tris talked to the squad collectively, telling them that it was *their* year, and that if they didn't get into the Big Money they would have only themselves to blame. He tried every resource at his command

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to keep the men in line. He encouraged—he bucked them up. And on the field he called into play all his strategy, all his cunning, in an endeavour to “bring home the bacon.”

Frank Holt’s playing caused groans, even curses and tears, but it couldn’t be openly criticised. His fielding was never raw—just ordinary. His batting was never weak—just average. That word summed it all up: he was no longer a star, but an *average* man.

The harm he did was to the “weak brothers.” Inevitably in an aggregation of twenty-five men, banded together because of expertness on the diamond primarily, there must be those who require moral support from their fellows. Now, Frank Holt had been one of the “supporters,” and when he seemed to lose his foundations of character, others were inclined to follow his bad example. Despite all Tris Ford could do through his system of moral suasion, two players did go bad. A spitball pitcher, who had proved most dependable in the box, went on a prolonged diet of wild oats. An outfielder, whose batting had been part of the team’s formidable offence, began to crook his elbow. In a fortnight these valuable men had to be laid off—and it came in the stretch, with three clubs straining every nerve to finish first.

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The Giant-killers finished third. "Lucky to do that," Tris Ford told his wife. "Frank Holt's losing his head lost us the flag."

The culprit came to the war office a few days after the last game of the schedule. His mouth was set, his expression of the don't-care pattern, his head held at the defiant angle. Tris Ford handed him an envelope, saying:

"Your pay check—and your share of the exhibition games."

There is nothing in the player's contract allotting him a share of the "gate" from exhibition games. The club is entitled to his full services during the term of contract, and therefore has every right to pocket the money from exhibition games, as from those of the regular schedule. Most clubs do, too. But the year before, after the World's emblem was won, the management of the Giant-killers had awarded the receipts from exposition games to the victorious players. And now, although the pennant was lost, Tris Ford gave the players this extra money.

Frank Holt didn't expect this favour, and he was taken aback. He mumbled "Thanks," and stared out of the window. Tris broke the uncomfortable silence.

"You've been with us seven years——"

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Holt straightened up, preparing to take what he knew was due him. But instead:

“—and for your help to the club *six* seasons, I ain’t going to say a word. Good-bye, Frank.”

It ought to have been enough, but it wasn’t. As Mrs. Ford said, Frank had gone daft over Lydia Lennox. He did not return to Gettysburg, as he had always done directly the season was over, but remained in town, running his yellow car about, usually with the Film Princess as a companion. It was one of the grandest Octobers imaginable that year—Indian summer every day.

Not long after the interview in the war office, Tris Ford heard further disquieting news. Frank Holt was going to join the actors and actresses of the Kaycleft plant!

Scenarios were being prepared, dealing with supposed incidents of baseball, and these were to be sent on to the Western plant at Los Angeles. At the same time Lydia Lennox and Frank Holt were to board the Overland Limited, and were to take part in the productions in California. “Of course,” said Mistress Rumour, “they are to be married before they start West.”

The moment he heard this Tris Ford took his hat and headed for the Kaycleft plant. He knew everybody, did Tris, and he was well acquainted with one of the partners—Jim Connoly.

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The rumour was true—Connoly said so. "Good money in it, Tris. Though you didn't win the pennant, Home-run Holt is as well known as any player in baseball—better'n most of 'em. And Lydia Lennox—she's the Sarah Bernhardt of the movies!"

"Don't care if she's got Ellen Terry and Elsie Janis backed off the stage, she's got to have her unconditional release!"

"Release?—from our plant?" asked Connoly incredulously.

"No, from ours."

"We're not responsible for her actions when she is off duty," insisted Connoly.

"Wait a minute, Jim. Let's see how this affects you. You're a successful man—growing richer every day—but you work mighty hard for your coin."

"I do that," agreed Connoly, sympathizing with himself.

"And what's your recreation? Why, rooting for the Giant-killers."

"Right there, Tris. Do you know I didn't miss a game all season?"

"I know you didn't, and you must think pretty well of the club."

"Well, I could tell you one or two changes to make," grinned Connoly. "But that infield—

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say, that's the greatest combination ever got together since wool socks were turned into baseballs."

"Stop there! right there, Jim. That infield will be broken up if this Film Princess don't get her release—unconditional release!"

"You mean?"

"Either she goes or Frank Holt goes!"

"Plenty of clubs would snap him up," sparred Connoly.

"You don't need to tell me that. I'll get a good price for him. But by the end of next season he won't be worth trading for a glass-arm pitcher. She'll ruin him."

"I can't fire that actress," whined Connoly; "can't possibly do it. Hang it, you hadn't ought to ask me to."

"I haven't asked you to," said Tris.

"Then what's on your chest?"

"Why, walking over here I figured out a little scheme——"

And for an hour Jim Connoly and Tris Ford put their heads together. Necessarily, something happened.

The next year was to be the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. To celebrate the event the Kaycleft Company planned a great war photoplay. And to get the greatest

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amount of newspaper publicity out of it, the producing director announced that the pictures would be made *right on the historic battlefield*. The scenario writers were put on the job, and were told that, regardless of historic accuracy, heart-interest was to be injected into the piece, in the person of Lydia Lennox, who was positively to appear in the cast.

Frank Holt was invited by Jim Connolly to go along as his guest. "You were born and brought up in the neighbourhood," said Jim, "and may be able to give us some pointers."

Everything was stage-managed beautifully, not only the *incidental* war photoplay, but the *main* drama which concerned Lydia Lennox—not the Film Princess—and the batting star of the Giant-killers. Whether she asked, or whether he proposed it, does not matter, but the occasion was seized upon to introduce Lydia Lennox to Mrs. Holt as her son's intended wife.

Well, notwithstanding her many appearances as the "finished" daughter of fashionable and wealthy parents—as "Gwendolin" in "The Poverty of Riches," for instance—Lydia Lennox slipped unconsciously into her true character—farther back, in point of time. She was the girl on the streets masquerading as the make-believe lady.

She was bold and forward, rushing up to Mrs.

THE DOUBLE SQUEEZE

Holt and smothering her with kisses, to the undemonstrative old lady's astonishment. Then Lydia went over to Frank, forced him down into a chair, and hopped into his lap. Putting one arm around him, she said in a raspy voice:

"We're goin' to be devilishly happy when we're married—hey, Frankie, darling?" And then she kissed him, to his utter embarrassment.

Frank got up abruptly, and put her in a chair none too gently.

"Whew! it's hot for this time of year, mother," he said, wiping his brow.

"Excuse me while I look to the dinner," said Mrs. Holt. As she went out she passed Frank the high-sign to follow.

He found her standing in the sitting-room, stern and grim. And——

Abigail Holt's eyes blazed with the fire of thirty years back, and she spoke to her eldest as never before in her life.

"Frank Holt! take that lewd woman out of the house 'fore your father comes and puts her out!"

Mrs. Holt started for the kitchen, but turned in her righteous wrath to finish:

"And never come here again as long as you run with the likes of her."

"Mother!" groaned Frank.

But she went unheeding.

THE DOUBLE SQUEEZE

Before the club started South in the spring there was a wedding. Tris Ford was best man. And the travelling list of the Giant-killers contained this entry:

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Holt.

"The bride?"

"Say—I thought the way you glimpsed the Champs in their minor-league suits you were a fair guesser! Well——

"Remember the game that October in the Big Series when the Giant-killers were to go into the lead or fall back?

"Remember there were two on, one out, and Frank Holt up?

"Remember, 'fore he faced the pitcher, he gave a glance at a sweet, modest lady in the front row of the upper pavilion—centre of the bunch of players' wives back of first?

"Remember how, looking so pretty-like and dainty, her eyes alight with excitement, she leaned forward timidly and held out her arms, much as to say, 'Gimme a hit!'

"And did Home-run Holt respond to that appeal—did he clean up?

"Say—there ain't nothing to that."

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